THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF OTHER EMPTINESS TAUGHT THROUGH MILAREPA'S SONGS

BY TONY DUFF

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF OTHER EMPTINESS TAUGHT THROUGH MILAREPA'S SONGS

INCLUDING TEACHINGS OF KHENPO TSULTRIM GYATSO

BY TONY DUFF

PADMA KARPO TRANSLATION COMMITTEE

Excerpts from the oral teachings of Karma Kagyu Khenpo Tsultrim Gyatso have been used not only with his permission but at his command.

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INTRODUCTION

Other Emptiness is a practical teaching of the Buddha meant for the attainment of enlightenment. It is also a very profound teaching which can easily be misunderstood. To assist with understanding it, two styles of explanation have become associated with it. The first looks at the historical context and the debates that occurred around it. This style of explanation is not essential to those who wish to take the teaching for practise, though it can be very helpful. The second is the actual teaching itself, as presented to students who intend to study then practise it.

This introduction explains Other Emptiness in the former style. It weaves the history and teaching of Other Emptiness into a story which will help the reader to get a sense of the Other Emptiness teaching and how it sits within the framework of the Buddha's teaching. This style of explanation should not be mistaken as a perfunctory exercise merely for scholars; through it, an astute reader can gain remarkable insights into what Other Emptiness is actually pointing to—the direct experience of wisdom.

Following that, the body of the book contains explanations of Other Emptiness as it is passed on to disciples. These explanations are, as you will see, straightforward transmissions of the view and meditation as the teaching calls it—or theory and practice as we would say in English—of Other Emptiness. They consist of a beginner's guide to the theory of Other Emptiness followed by two medium level guides to the theory and practice of Other Emptiness based on two songs of the great yogin Milarepa.

The Origins of Other Emptiness

Emptiness and The Four Turnings of the Wheel of Dharma

The Buddha, on his way towards Varanasi where he was going in order to begin formally teaching his dharma, was met by two brahmans. In the short discussion that ensued, the Buddha made it clear that emptiness would the fundament of his teachings.

Following that, the Buddha presented his dharma teaching in four major stages. Each one was called a "turning of the wheel of dharma", with "wheel" meaning a "complete level or sphere" of dharma or spiritual truth, and "turning" meaning that the teaching of that particular level of spiritual truth, one which had been either lost from or not previously taught in human society, was being set in motion. The first three turnings of the wheel of dharma were presentations of the common or exoteric teachings, called the sūtras. The fourth turning of the wheel of dharma was the various presentations

of the uncommon or esoteric teachings, called the tantras, taken as a whole.

The Buddha explained in the Great Vehicle *Unravelling the Intent Sūtra* that he taught in stages like that for the sake of his disciples, so that they could gradually be led from their state of confusion into full realization of the truth and illustrated it with the analogy of spoon-feeding children. The relevant section of the sūtra is quoted on page xxxiii.

Thus, the Buddha himself said before he began teaching that emptiness would be a fundament of his teaching. However, when he turned the wheels of dharma, he showed emptiness in varying degrees of profundity and it is not always obvious exactly how he taught emptiness within them. Therefore, it became essential for all of his followers to determine exactly how emptiness had been taught through the various turnings of the wheel.

This matter of emptiness and how it is to be understood throughout the turnings of the wheel of dharma is very subtle, so his followers arrived at varying ways of explaining it in accordance with their own capacity to understand the subtlety involved. Generally speaking, their determinations resulted in four main schools of Buddhist philosophy or four main tenet systems as they are called: two for those who accepted only the first turning of the wheel of dharma—the Particularist and Sūtra Follower tenet systems—and two for followers who either accepted all three sūtra turnings or accepted both those three and the fourth tantra turning—the Mind Only and Middle Way tenet systems.

Indian schools who followed the tantras usually followed the Middle Way and saw emptiness taught in relation to the four turnings as follows:

> The first turning was taught for two reasons. It was taught in order to motivate disciples to take up the Buddhist teaching in order to free themselves from cyclic existence. It was also taught to give them a practice which would lead to a partial understanding of emptiness, one that would be enough to get them out of the totally unsatisfactory situation of cyclic existence and establish them in the partially satisfactory situation of being an arhat buddha.
>
> The second turning of the wheel was taught in order to show the full meaning of emptiness to disciples and to show them the practices connected with that which would establish them in the entirely satisfactory situation of being a truly complete buddha.
>
> The third turning of the wheel had a number of themes but it showed in general that all sentient beings have a core of mind which is the same type of mind as the enlightened mind of a buddha and that they can, therefore, become a buddha. It then indirectly showed how to manifest the wisdom of a buddha by developing that seed.
>
> The fourth turning of the wheel was taught in order to show that the seed of enlightenment possessed by all beings is not merely a seed of the enlightened mind of a buddha but is the actual wisdom mind of a buddha which can be manifested directly. This

> turning explicitly showed how to manifest the wisdom of a buddha.
>
> Summed up even further, the main themes of the Buddha's teaching across the four turnings of the wheel were: renunciation of cyclic existence together with a partial teaching on emptiness, taught as the absence of a personal self; emptiness as the absence of self-nature coupled with the teaching of the methods needed to attain enlightenment; buddha's wisdom taught as the form of a seed of enlightenment; and buddha's wisdom taught as something which can be directly manifested.

That is the thought that was generally accepted amongst Indian masters whose schools followed all four turnings of the wheel. However, there was an additional stream of thought in which it was considered that the third turning of the wheel showed a very profound teaching on emptiness, in which emptiness was not taught in regard to eliminating the fictional world made up by dualistic ignorance, as was done in the second turning, but was taught in regard to pointing out the presence of the fact of wisdom, as was openly done in the fourth turning.

Those who followed this additional stream of thought saw that this very profound teaching on emptiness was taught by the Buddha in the third turning of the wheel, entrusted by him to his regent Maitreya, and then transmitted through a line of Indian masters including Asaṅga and Maitrīpa. These teachings were, therefore, referred to with words like "the profound meditation system of Maitreya" but there was, in

India, no special name for it. Later, in Tibet, it was called the system of Other Emptiness.

We can use the summation given just above to introduce very neatly the view that was later called Other Emptiness. Notice that those summations contain no mention of emptiness in the third and fourth turnings of the wheel. Followers of what was later called Other Emptiness saw that the third turning of the wheel taught emptiness in a particular way, which they called "empty of other", *which was effectively teaching that wisdom itself is the ultimate teaching of emptiness*, and that the fourth turning of the wheel taught the same kind of emptiness but taught it in the most uninhibited way possible. This view in which emptiness in the form of wisdom is made prime is not common, is very profound, and is not easy to understand. Therefore, if you are new to this view, there is no need to puzzle over the words here; instead, take them as part of a story being woven to facilitate an understanding of it.



Figure 1. Master Maitripa

Indian Buddhism Goes to Tibet

The Buddha's teachings on emptiness and the four turnings of the wheel were transmitted into Tibet. Three major schools called Nyingma, Kagyu, and Sakya, and a smaller one called Jonang arose in Tibet in the period from the eighth to twelfth centuries C.E., all of which were direct continuations

of Indian Buddhist schools. Much later, in the fifteenth century, a fourth major school of Tibetan Buddhism—the Gelugpa school—arose based on the teachings of its founder Lord Tsongkhapa [1357–1419]; this school was not a direct continuation of an Indian school of Buddhism and therefore did not get the teaching regarding emptiness and the turnings of the wheel directly from Indian sources.

All of these Tibetan schools followed the general Indian presentation of the meaning of the four turnings of the wheel given in the summations above. The Nyingma, Kagyu, and Jonang schools also had the teachings of the profound emptiness taught in the third and fourth turnings of the wheel. The Sakya school did not have this teaching on profound emptiness to begin with though a few of its masters such as Serdog Panchen and Gorampa later received and upheld that teaching. The Gelug school was markedly different from all these schools—it followed a view of how emptiness was taught throughout the four turnings based on logical considerations presented by its founder, Tsongkhapa. Moreover, it did not have the teaching on profound emptiness.

In Tibet, the Name "Other Emptiness" is given to the Profound Teaching on Emptiness

As mentioned above, some Tibetan Buddhist schools received the very profound teaching on emptiness that arose in conjunction with the third turning of the wheel of dharma and some did not. One school that received it—the Jonang school—coined a name for it in the early 14th century C.E. Noting that the type of emptiness taught in the second turning of the wheel was an emptiness of self-nature, they

named that "emptiness of self" or "rangtong[1]" in Tibetan and, noting that the type of emptiness taught in the third turning of the wheel was an emptiness of other entity, they named that "emptiness of other" or "zhantong[2]" in Tibetan.

The other Tibetan schools who had received this very profound teaching on emptiness realized that this name applied to their own understanding of the Buddha's teaching and called themselves "Other Emptiness" schools after that time and used the terms "self emptiness" and "other emptiness" when presenting the theory and practice of their schools. The Tibetan schools that did not have the teaching on this profound emptiness did not use these terms and, moreover, the Gelug school argued strongly against the schools which did have it.

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[1] Tib. rang stong.

[2] Tib. gzhan stong. It has become popular in the West to transliterate the Tibetan letter ཞ་ with "sha" but this is mistaken. There is another Tibetan letter ཤ་, which is pronounced in exactly the same way as is the English "sha", with the tongue almost touching the upper palate; it is correct to transliterate and pronounce this letter as "sha". The letter ཞ་ is pronounced with the tongue moved down to the floor of the mouth, resulting in a sound similar to some European letters which are transliterated as "zha". It is correct to transliterate and pronounce this letter as "zha"; transliterating it as "sha" both indicates an incorrect spelling and leads to an incorrect pronunciation. Thus, the word here should be written "zhantong" and pronounced similarly; writing and pronouncing it as "shantong" as is commonly done is a mistake.

The Kagyu School and Other Emptiness

Of the major Tibetan schools who did have the Other Emptiness teaching, the Kagyu school was the continuation of a very long line of transmission of the Buddha's teachings in India. The Tibetan man Marpa, who later became known as Marpa the Translator, went to India three times in the middle of the eleventh century C.E., where he received and mastered the teachings of the Indian Kagyu lineage from the highly learned and accomplished Nāropa.



Figure 2. Nāropa

During one of Marpa's trips to India, Nāropa told him to go to master Maitrīpa in order to get complete teachings on the view, stating that Maitrīpa was the most knowledgeable Buddhist master regarding the view in India at the time. Marpa did that and received the very profound teachings on emptiness which later became known in Tibet as Other Emptiness.

Marpa took all of the teachings he received in India back to Tibet, then taught them to Tibetan disciples who practised them, realized them, and carried on the lineage. In that way, Nāropa's lineage of Indian Buddhist teachings continued on into Tibet as the Kagyu lineage, a lineage whose entire theory and practice was based in the very profound emptiness taught

in both the third and fourth turnings of the wheel which later became known as Other Emptiness.

Marpa had four outstanding disciples. The most well-known was the yogin called Milarepa, who became renowned for his great perseverance in ascetic practice done high in the snowy mountains of Tibet and great realization born of it. Milarepa was given the names Laughing Vajra and Joyful to Hear because he was adept at giving his dharma teachings in the form of songs which he spontaneously composed out of his realization.



Figure 3. Marpa

Milarepa was not just a dumb yogi with some kind of space-like realization. He had an extraordinary knowledge of the Buddha's teaching and a correct realization of it. He had studied hard during the time he spent with Marpa and knew the details of the Buddha's teaching extremely well and later practised even harder to gain a correct realization of what he had learned. It is noteworthy that his learning was not only a result of his own diligence but also a reflection of Marpa's knowledge and realization, and abilities as a teacher. It is generally thought within the Kagyu lineage that Marpa has been the most skilful of all Kagyu teachers and Milarepa's detailed knowledge of the Buddha's teachings gained in the few short years that he was with Marpa supports that. Milarepa's knowledge is very evident in his songs, for example in the two of his songs which form the basis of this book.

A major point of interest is that Milarepa was so early in the Kagyu lineage that his teaching showed the Buddha's teaching as it came from India. For example, the terminology of the Other Emptiness system—words like "other emptiness" and "self emptiness"—are not seen in his teachings because they were not brought into use until nearly 200 years later, so does that mean that these terms are merely Tibetan inventions that do not apply to the teaching originally brought into Tibet? The Kagyu lineage holders do not think so—immediately after these terms were brought into official use by the throne holder of the Jonang school, Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen [1292–1361], the Karma Kagyu lineage holder of the time, the third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje [1284–1339], proclaimed that the theory and practice of the Kagyu school as a whole was and always had been that of Other Emptiness. Ever since then, the great lineage holders of the Karma Kagyu and some other branches of the Kagyu, too, have made the same proclamation. Thus, we can look at Milarepa's teachings to find out how what later became known as the system of Other Emptiness was taught before the word "other emptiness" was invented.



Figure 4. Milarepa

Continuing on into more recent times, the first Jamgon Kongtrul [1813–1899] and his lineage have been great proponents within the Kagyu of Other Emptiness. In very recent

times, his follower Khenpo Tsultrim Gyatso has become known worldwide for his explanations of the theory and practice of the Kagyu school through Milarepa's songs.

Personally speaking, I have heard large amounts of teaching on Other Emptiness from Nyingma, Kagyu, and Sakya masters. On the Kagyu side, I have had extensive private teachings on Other Emptiness from the Karma Kagyu Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, who asked me to translate an important text by the first Jamgon Kongtrul detailing how to practise Other Emptiness according to the teachings of the Jonang school. The text, *Instructions for Practising the View of Other Emptiness, a Text of Oral Instructions by Jamgon Kongtrul*, should be read in conjunction with this book.

I have also had extensive teachings from Khenpo Tsultrim Gyatso on Other Emptiness, including many in which he explained the Other Emptiness approach of the Kagyu school using Milarepa's songs as a basis. He asked me on a number of occasions in small groups of his translators to gather the teachings he had been giving and use them—as I saw fit—to write clear explanations of Other Emptiness. This and another book, *Other Emptiness, a Complete Exposition of the Zhantong System*[4] which also is recommended to be read in conjunction with this book, fulfil his command.

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[3] By Tony Duff, published by Padma Karpo Translation Committee, 2011, ISBN: 978-9937-572-03-0.

[4] To be published shortly by Padma Karpo Translation Committee.

Given that the Other Emptiness teaching is not a mere philosophical exercise as is often thought these days, but is a teaching of the Buddha meant to be practised in order to gain enlightenment, it is important to notice that the introduction down to this point—starting with the Buddha at the beginning and coming down through Indian and Tibetan masters to myself, a Westerner—shows that the teachings in this book have a proper lineage[5]. Thus the contents of this book are not academic or philosophic musings like those contained in some other books on the topic which have appeared recently by Western scholars, but are the teaching of Buddha according to the way that a valid lineage presents it.

Summary

This book shows how the fundament of the Buddha's teaching, emptiness, is understood within the four turnings of the wheel of dharma according to the teachings of the Tibetan Kagyu school. Two songs of one of the most famous figures of the school, the great yogin Milarepa, are used to explain it. In this way, the teaching of the Other Emptiness system, which is a practical teaching for enlightenment, is clearly exposed.

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[5] It has always been said in Buddhism that a valid lineage is required for the transmission of the Buddhist teaching. What this actually means is that there has to have been an un-interrupted line of person to person transmission for the teaching to be effective. Book learning in Buddhism has only ever been seen as a support to the actual transmission of the teaching from person to person. The Buddha himself said that his teaching would be transmitted in two ways: one by verbal statement and the other by realization.

The Texts Included in the Book

Milarepa's songs are used in this book to show the theory and practice which has become known as Other Emptiness. As mentioned before, his expression of this system is very important because he gave voice to it in the very early days of the Kagyu lineage, in the days when the Indian teachings from Maitrīpa[6]—which were only later called Other Emptiness—were very fresh and not ornamented with later, Tibetan refinements[7].

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[6] The reader by now will understand the importance of the Indian master Maitrīpa to all Tibetan Buddhist schools but especially to those, such as the Kagyu, who treasure his presentations of the ultimate meaning of the sūtras being contained in the third turning. A selection of his works has been translated and published by Padma Karpo Translation Committee as a support for those trying to understand and practise the Other Emptiness view as it was transmitted from India to Tibet and especially for followers of the Kagyu for whom his teachings are an underpinning of their system: *Maitripa's Writings on the View, The Main Indian Source of the Tibetan Views of Other Emptiness*, second edition published January 2010, author Tony Duff, ISBN: 938-9937-9031-7-2.

[7] An obvious Tibetan refinement to the original teaching is the use of the terms "other emptiness". However, there have been others, too. For instance, it is known that Mahāmudrā is taught a little differently now from the way that Gampopa, the next lineage holder after Milarepa, taught it. The reader is directed to *Gampopa Teaches Essence Mahāmudrā, Interviews with his Heart Disciples, Dusum Khyenpa and Others*, by Tony Duff, published by Padma Karpo Translation Committee, 2011, ISBN: 978-

(continued...)

The Kagyu lineage regards Milarepa's song called *An Authentic Expression of the Middle Way* as one of the most important of his songs because it presents the entire progression of the view as understood in the Kagyu School in an economy of words and from his own realization of it. The lineage also regards Milarepa's song called *Ultimate View, Meditation, Conduct, and Fruition* as important because it shows the practice of that ultimate view, again in an economy of words and again out of his own realization of it.

1. An Authentic Expression of the Middle Way

An Authentic Expression of the Middle Way is one of the many songs contained in the *Collected Songs of Milarepa*[8]. It is famous for its complete and correct (or authentic as the title says) expression of the view of the Middle Way as understood in the Kagyu School.

The song shows all possible levels of view, starting out with the various types of worldly, wrong views held by humans, then proceeding sequentially through the increasingly profound views expressed in the three turnings of the wheel of sūtra according to the sequence of meaning taught by the

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[7](...continued)
9937–572-08-8.

[8] This was originally published in English under the title *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* which is a misnomer. In Tibetan literature, the words "the hundred thousand" are used in book titles to mean "the collected works of"; they do not mean that there are, literally, one hundred thousand songs or texts, etcetera, in a collection.

Buddha himself and according to the ultimate meaning of the third turning transmitted through Maitreya and Maitrīpa.

The song is an exceptional teaching which is frequently used as an aid to teaching the view of the Kagyu school. It is so important that it was later explained at length by All-Knowing Padma Karpo, the famous author of the Drukpa Kagyu, in a long text called *Clarification Made Using Three Textual Systems of the Middle Way, "A Chariot Which Accomplishes the Definitive Meaning"* (the three textual systems referred to in the title are this song of Milarepa, Nāgārjuna's *Root Prajñā*, and Chandrakīrti's *Entrance to the Middle Way*).

This song starts on page 15 with a prologue that sets out the circumstances that led to the song being sung. It was not sung to a human audience but to an audience of non-humans consisting of two groups who came together to request a teaching on the ultimate view.

The first and largest group was the "neither-gods-nor-demons". This is a group consisting of gods of the desire realm and ghosts and other troublesome spirits of the preta realm[9]. The beings in this group are usually categorized into eight sub-groups. All these beings have the capacity to affect humans and all of them have haughtiness like that of a bully, so they create trouble to a greater or lesser degree in the human realm.

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[9] In Buddhist cosmology, the preta realm is a place of rebirth below the animal realm and above the hell realm.

The smarter ones among the neither-gods-nor-demons control the more stupid ones, who then act as their henchmen and foot soldiers. Milarepa mentions this towards the end of his song when he speaks of the clever ones outsmarting the stupid ones. His comment following that, when he says that "foxes are frightened when they hear the roar of a lion", means that even the smart ones among them are not so smart and collapse when someone like Milarepa roars like a lion, teaching the ultimate view of the Buddha to them.

Milarepa uses this terminology of roaring like a lion because the Buddha referred to the ultimate teaching of the view in third turning—which is the view of the Other Emptiness system—as "the lion's roar of the view". It conveys the sense that this is the ultimate roar of the Buddha who is a lion amongst beings, that it is an expression of the view which causes all lesser views to tremble when confronted by it.

The second group was the five Tseringma sisters or five Long-Life sisters. This is a group of five sister spirits who lived in the area of Ding Drin, a place where Milarepa often meditated. They had come to him before this song was sung, taken the bodhisatva[10] vow, and sworn that they would support his development of attainment with their capabilities, as mentioned in the song. Having done so, they flew off and disappeared. Now they have come back to act as translators while the first group asks for a particular teaching. Milarepa is pleased to see them.

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[10] For the spelling of bodhisatva, see the glossary.

The five Tseringma sisters were taken by Milarepa as consorts for his karmamudrā practice. The leading sister, whose name Tashi Tseringma means "Auspicious Long-Life Lady", had the ability to bestow long life and vitality. Milarepa regarded her as very special and took her as his main consort over a long period of time. He mentions her long hair, which is regarded by Tibetan culture to be connected with long life and virility, saying that her tresses of hair possess svastika—meaning firmness and auspiciousness—of life.

These two groups of non-humans came together before Milarepa, made the necessary offerings, and then requested an ultimate teaching of dharma. Milarepa responded with the very profound teaching contained in the song.

The first part of the actual teaching in the song, from "Generally, the sentient beings of three-realmed saṃsāra" to "There are, based on viewing a self, very many indeed" explains mistaken, worldly views.

The rest of the teaching in the song, from "Complying with your type of mind, you ones" to "That, for me the yogin, is the measure of my realization", sets out the transcendent view taught by the Buddha. It sets this out in two steps.

The first step, from"From the standpoint of the superfactual truth" to "Everything is a unification vast and open", is the understanding of the middle turning of the wheel of dharma

as expressed by the Autonomy[11] and Consequence[12] Middle Way schools. It says that saṃsāra and nirvāṇa do not exist in the superfactual truth but do exist in the fictional truth as mere designations made with names and words. In the Other Emptiness Middle Way school, this is called the empty of self view.

The second part, from "The experts who realize it that way" to "Arise in the manner of a precious jewel", is the understanding of the third turning of the wheel expressed by the Other Emptiness Middle Way school. The line "Do not see consciousness, they see wisdom" sums up the whole meaning: consciousness, being empty of a self-entity, is empty of a self, so is not seen, whereas wisdom, not being empty of its own entity, is empty of what is other than it, so is seen.

This song is mainly about the view or theory of Other Emptiness, but it is not just an exercise in philosophy, rather, it is a practical teaching that can be understood then applied in meditation. This can be clearly seen in the explanation following the song which was composed based on Khenpo Tsultrim's explanation of the song. The beauty of this song is that it expresses the philosophy perfectly but does so in the very practical words of a great yogin.

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[11] Skt. svatantrika.

[12] Skt. prāsaṅgika.

2. Ultimate View, Meditation, Conduct, and Fruition

The song of Milarepa called *Ultimate View, Meditation, Conduct, and Fruition* shows the practice of other emptiness in the words of a great yogin. An explanation of the song composed based on Khenpo Tsultrim Gyatso's teaching on it follows the song. The explanation clearly shows that Other Emptiness is not just an exercise in philosophy but a practical teaching that can be understood and practised in meditation.

About Other Emptiness

Other Emptiness is not merely an Exercise in Philosophy

The Buddha stated in his very first teaching that the confused view of reality that exists in the minds of ordinary beings causes them to have an unsatisfactory kind of existence. To give an example, a machine which is faulty never runs well and constantly causes trouble; similarly, a mind which is faulty because of its distorted view of reality causes an unenlightened type of existence which never runs well and is constantly troubled. He also stated that, if sentient beings remove their confusion, they will return to a satisfactory existence. If the fault in the machine is fixed, it will run without trouble and, similarly, if the distorted views of reality are removed from mind, the ensuing enlightened type of existence will be satisfactory by nature. Therefore, the Buddha taught the means to remove that confusion and all of them—including the very profound teachings of the third turning called Other Emptiness—were taught for the one purpose of attaining enlightenment.

The Other Emptiness system is a very profound system of Buddhist theory and practice—the view is not difficult to understand when clearly explained but, as with the tantras, its actual meaning is one which most people cannot directly access through meditation without considerable amount of preparation. Moreover, not all Tibetan Buddhist schools received this system of theory and practice from their sources. These two factors combined meant that not all Tibetan schools accepted it and, of those who did not, some—notably the Gelugpa school—even argued vehemently against it. Because of the argument raised against it, Other Emptiness at times became bogged down in meaningless debate over its validity. Worse, in these times, it has become thought of as a purely academic or philosophical exercise.

In fact, Other Emptiness is a thoroughly practical teaching given by the Buddha for the purpose of attaining enlightenment. This is clearly seen when schools such as the Kagyu, which state unequivocally that their view and meditation is that of Other Emptiness, teach the system of Other Emptiness to disciples. On those occasions, it is taught without either the polemic that has appeared in challenges to its validity or un-needed philosophical argument.

There are many ways to explain Buddhism, with some emphasizing the theoretical side and others emphasizing the practical side. According to the system of Buddhism that came from North India into Tibet, practical instruction on profound matters consists of three facets: view, meditation, and conduct, where view is the understanding of the realization that will be accomplished through meditation, meditation is the means for gaining that realization, and conduct is

behaviour that fits with and supports that kind of meditation. The second Drukchen, Gyalwang Je, explained this point in his *"Chariot of Establishment", Treasure Trove of a Mind Absorbed in the Profound Meaning*[13]:

> The tathāgata's precious discourses in their entirety are comprised of what is to be explained—the three baskets consisting of his authoritative statements—and what is to be accomplished—the three higher trainings that lead to realization ... The meaning of the three higher trainings is nicely condensed down into the guru's foremost instructions[14] and in that context they are called "view, meditation, and conduct". This point has been explained over and again, so much so that it has become as well known as the sun and moon.

When Other Emptiness is taught as originally intended, it comes as the guru's foremost instructions on how to access wisdom and is, therefore, taught in the framework of view, meditation, and conduct as just explained. This can be seen again and again in writings which actually teach Other Emptiness. For example, Milarepa's song *Ultimate View, Meditation, Conduct, and Fruition* in this book is a complete, practical teaching on Other Emptiness set out exactly according to the

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[13] Published by Padma Karpo Translation Committee in *A Juggernaut of the Non-Dual View, Ultimate Teachings of the Second Drukchen, Gyalwang Je*, by Tony Duff, 2011, ISBN: 978-9937-572-07-1.

[14] For foremost instructions, see the glossary.

view, meditation, and conduct framework which is the hallmark of oral instructions for practising the profound.

Note that view, meditation, and conduct are sometimes reduced down to the first two, "view and meditation", because of focussing on accomplishment of the desired realization. This is exactly equivalent to talking, in English, about "the theory and practice" of a particular subject. Thus, "theory and practice" in the title of this book is intended to convey the point that it contains practical teaching on Other Emptiness, rather than being yet another dissertation on the philosophical argument which tends to mask its actual meaning.

Validating the Source of the Teaching

As mentioned above, Other Emptiness is a teaching of the Buddha intended as a means for the attainment of enlightenment, which, when practically taught, is given as profound oral instructions in the framework of view, meditation, and conduct. The opponents to this system attempt to uproot it by claiming that it is an invention of heretics. Their claim has been disproved many times over the centuries but they do not listen and continue to repeat their claim. This has led to a general reluctance amongst proponents of Other Emptiness to go through the exercise, yet again, of showing that it is a teaching of the Buddha.

Nevertheless, it has always been said in Buddhism that a valid lineage is required for the transmission of Buddhism, so their claim provides us with a reason to do what we should do anyway, which is to look into history to satisfy ourselves that the Other Emptiness teaching has a valid source and lineage.

A very brief summary of that history is presented in this section. A more extensive and conclusive presentation can be read in a history text by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyatso which has been translated and included in the *Other Emptiness, a Complete Exposition of the Zhantong System* mentioned earlier.

It is generally felt that there are two teachings of other emptiness, one taught in the sūtras and one taught in the tantras. Let us look at the history of the sutra teaching first. The teachings of the entire third turning of the wheel were taught by Śhākyamuni Buddha who then entrusted them to his regent, Maitreya. After the Buddha's nirvāṇa, Maitreya's teachings on the third turning were partially lost in India but were brought back through the agency of the Indian master Asaṅga. Through difficult practice, Asaṅga was able to meet Maitreya and receive his teachings during a long period of time. Asaṅga wrote the teachings down and distributed them in the form of five texts which later became known as *Maitreya's Five Dharmas*. He also wrote many commentaries to them.

The most profound of *Maitreya's Five Dharmas*, the *Great Vehicle Highest Continuum Treatise*[15] disappeared for a period after being written by Asaṅga, but was discovered again by the

[15] Skt. mahāyānottaratantra śhāstra. This treatise is about tathāgatagarbha, which is referred to as the continuum in the name of the text. The full name given here is mostly abbreviated to *Highest Continuum*. Some feel that this name is an invention and that the text was actually called "ratnagotravibhaṅga" meaning "Distinguishing The Precious Lineage" where lineage refers to the tathāgatagarbha.

Indian master Maitrīpa, who withdrew a copy of it from an old stupa. At that time Maitrīpa, like Asaṅga, had a face-to-face meeting with Maitreya and in that meeting Maitreya verified that the text which Maitrīpa had found was authentic, gave him the reading transmission of the text, and urged him to spread the teaching contained in it.

The *Highest Continuum* contains the teachings of the third turning at all levels of profundity, but Maitrīpa taught the most profound level only to a few disciples and it did not spread throughout all Tibetan Buddhist schools. For example, the great Tibetan translator Ngog Loden Sherab[16] went to Kashmir and studied with holders of Maitrīpa's lineage of teachings but did not receive the extremely profound, other emptiness explanation. In Tibet, Ngog Loden Sherab translated the *Highest Continuum* and taught it widely with the result that later schools who accepted his teaching did not have the extremely profound, other emptiness explanation.

On the other hand, Marpa the Translator was sent by his guru Nāropa to study with Maitrīpa. Marpa did so, received a complete set of teachings on the view from Maitrīpa, in-

[16] Ngog Loden Sherab [1059–1109], a disciple of Atīśha, was one of the foremost translators during the later spread of dharma in Tibet. He was a prolific and expert translator, though he did not get all teachings that were available in India, as this story shows. His translation of the *Highest Continuum* while popular amongst those Tibetan Buddhist schools who did not have the profound meditation teachings according to Maitreya, were often looked down on by other translators and other Tibetan schools who did have those teachings.

cluding the extremely profound, other emptiness explanation, and that became the basis for the view of the Tibetan Kagyu school that developed from Marpa. Marpa transmitted these teachings to a number of disciples, including the yogin Milarepa. Thus the Kagyu lineage follows the view explicitly taught by the Buddha in which the three turnings of the wheel of the sūtra teachings are sequentially more profound, with the third turning teaching the profound view of wisdom, as explained by Maitrīpa to Marpa and others.

Finally, there is other emptiness taught in the tantras. The term "other emptiness" was initially coined in relation to the many statements in the *Kālachakra Tantra* which explicitly show the other-empty style of emptiness. The *Kālachakra Tantra* was taught by the Buddha himself in ancient India. The major Indian commentaries by followers of the Buddha also make many statements which explicitly show the other-empty style of emptiness. Moreover, all of these statements in the *Kālachakra Tantra* and its commentaries are fully in accord with the other emptiness taught in the third turning sūtras. Furthermore, the tantras as a whole have the approach of Other Emptiness and all of them were taught by the Buddha himself or his appointed holder of the tantras, Vajrapāṇi. Thus, Other Emptiness as seen in the tantric teachings is also a teaching of the Buddha.

Other Emptiness is Part of a Step-wise Presentation of the Buddha's Teaching

All the Other Emptiness schools accept the Buddha's statements about his turnings of the wheels of dharma being progressively more profound because they are teachings of

the Buddha. In relation to that, those schools also maintain that the Buddha's teachings of emptiness are to be found in both the second and third turnings of the wheel and that the teachings of emptiness found in the third turning are the ultimate ones.

In contrast to that, the Gelug school follows the conclusions arrived at through logic by its founder, Tsongkhapa, teaching that the teachings on emptiness are to be found in the second turning of the wheel of dharma and that those teachings are more profound than the teachings of the third turning. The first Jamgon Kongtrul, a great proponent of Other Emptiness, says in his *Treasury which is an Encyclopædia of Knowledge* that it is hard to understand how Tsongkhapa could simply ignore what the Buddha had said. The Gelug school has an answer to that, though it again comes from an insistence on a certain line of logical reasoning and seems to avoid other facts associated with this issue. The portions of the *Treasury which is an Encyclopædia of Knowledge* which examine this issue have been included in the *Other Emptiness, a Complete Exposition of the Zhantong System* so that the arguments involved can be seen.

To resolve this difference of opinion, a deep investigation into the ways that these various schools define the three turnings of the wheel of dharma as either provisional or definitive in meaning is needed. That is outside the scope of this introduction, though it is briefly examined in the body of the book. It is fully examined in the companion book *Other Emptiness, A Complete Explanation of the Zhantong System.*

Nonetheless, here is a summary of how the Other Emptiness schools see a progressively more profound meaning in each of the first three turnings of the wheel of dharma:

> The teaching of the first turning of the wheel starts with renunciation and goes through to absence of a personal self-nature. It is not a complete teaching on absence of self-nature because it shows only the absence of self-nature in a person and not the absence of self-nature in all other phenomena.
>
> The second turning of the wheel takes the teaching of absence of self-nature to its limit by teaching that everything—persons and phenomena—are devoid or empty, it is said, of a self-nature. Then it teaches that the way to arrive at an enlightened state of being is to use the logical reasoning power of samsaric mind to overcome the fictions created by samsaric mind of persons and phenomena having a self-nature. The style of the logic involved is the utter negation of all these fictional persons and phenomena projected by the deluded, samsaric mind. This is an indirect approach to achieving enlightened being.
>
> The teaching of the third turning of the wheel goes a step further by showing that, while all those fictional phenomena conceived by a deluded mind do not exist in truth, there is a seed of enlightened mind that does truly does exist in all sentient beings. It calls that wisdom mind "tathāgatagarbha" and also "sugatagarbha", meaning "the seed from which a tathāgata or sugata, a buddha", can come. This presence in fact of wisdom can also be under-

> stood as emptiness, though in this case it is the emptiness within wisdom of everything other than the wisdom.

Here are quotations from two of the third turning sūtras—*Unravelling the Intent Sūtra*[17] and the *Sūtra Requested by King Dhāraṇeśhvara*—in which the Buddha himself clearly states that he does teach a progressively more profound meaning in each of the first three turnings of the dharma wheel. These are used by the Other Emptiness schools to point out that the views of their opponents are fundamentally flawed because they are contrary to what the Buddha himself has said was the mode of presentation of his teaching. The former sūtra says,

> The Bhagavat first, in the place of Varaṇāsi, at Ṛiṣhis Dropping in the deer park, for those to be truly placed into the Śhrāvaka Vehicle, completely teaching the four truths of the noble ones[18], fully turned the amazing and wondrous dharma wheel which to that time had not been turned in the worlds conducive to dharma—the worlds either of gods or humans—for a first time. That turning of the dharma wheel by the Bhagavat moreover was

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[17] Skt. saṃdhinirmocanasūtra. A Great Vehicle, third turning sūtra regarded as one of the four main Mind Only sūtras.

[18] Although sometimes translated as "four noble truths" it is in fact, both according to the grammar involved and the Buddha's explanation, "the four truths of the noble ones". The name is given because these four truths are only fully seen by noble ones, that is, the ones who have attained the path of seeing.

> surpassed, was temporary, and was provisional meaning that could be a ground for debate.
>
> Then the Bhagavat, beginning from no entityness of dharmas, beginning from no birth, no cessation, and primordial peace and naturally perfect nirvāṇa, for those to be truly placed into the Great Vehicle, with the aspect of stating emptiness, turned the even more amazing and wondrous second dharma wheel. That turning of the second dharma wheel by the Bhagavat moreover was surpassed, was temporary, and was provisional meaning that could be a ground for debate.
>
> But then the Bhagavat, beginning from there being no entityness of dharma, beginning from no-birth-ness and no-cessation-ness, primordial-peace-ness, and naturally-perfect-nirvāṇa-ness[19], for those to be truly placed into all vehicles, turned with its precise distinctions the extremely amazing and wondrous third dharma wheel. This turning of the dharma wheel by the Bhagavat was not surpassed, was not temporary, was definitive meaning so could not be a ground for debate.

Then the latter says,

> Son of the family, it is like this. For example, there is a skilled jeweller who knows the craft of jewellery well. Of the various types of precious jewels, he has

[19] The -ness attached to each of these shows that they were not taught as a negation as they were in the second wheel but as an existent item.

taken a precious jewel which is totally impure. He wets it with a penetrating, chemical salt solution then thoroughly cleans it with a hair cloth and in that way gives it a thorough cleaning. He does not stop his efforts at just that, either. Beyond that, to clean it he wets it with a penetrating decoction then thoroughly cleans it with a woollen flannel and in that way gives it a thorough cleaning. He does not stop his efforts at just that, either. Beyond that, to clean it he also wets it with a strong chemical liquid then thoroughly cleans it with a fine cotton cloth and in that way thoroughly cleans it. Thoroughly cleansed and free of encrustation, it is now called "an excellent type of Lapis Lazuli".

Son of the family, in the same way, the tathāgata, knowing the element of totally impure sentient beings[20], uses the story of renunciation which is about impermanence, suffering, lack of self, and impurity to arouse disenchantment in those sentient beings who like cyclic existence and to get them into the taming that goes with the noble dharma. The tathāgata does not stop his efforts at just that much, either. Beyond that, he uses the story of emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness to make them realize the mode of a tathāgata[21]. The tathāgata does not stop his efforts at just that much,

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[20] Element is a name for buddha-nature. In the third turning of the wheel, beings are classed into three types: buddhas, who are totally pure; those on the path, who are mixed pure and impure; and ordinary beings who are totally impure.

[21] These last two sentences are the second turning of the wheel.

either. Beyond that, he uses the story of the non-regressing wheel[22] and the story of the three spheres of total purity[23] to make those sentient beings who have the cause of varying natures to enter the tathāgata's place.

The Name "Empty of Other" and its Meaning

The Tibetan name "zhantong" literally meaning "empty of other"[24] was invented for convenience when speaking of the ultimate meaning of the third turning of the wheel teachings.

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[22] "Non-regressing" is a standard term used to describe the ultimate teachings of the third turning of the wheel of dharma. When a person has heard and comprehended these teachings, he immediately understands that the teachings of the earlier turnings of the wheel are not ultimate and assumes the position that he will never turn back from these teachings and regress to taking one of the lesser views as ultimate.

Note how the first turning is characterized as that which gets sentient beings involved with the dharma. Then the second turning more specifically shows them the mode of a tathāgata's being. Then the third actually takes them into the tathāgata's place, which is wisdom.

[23] The three spheres of total purity are the three steps towards full enlightenment described in these teachings: impure sentient beings, partially pure beings who have progressed on the path; and totally pure buddhas.

[24] The original phrase in Tibetan was "gzhan gyis stong pa" meaning "empty of other". That was shortened to "gzhan stong" with the same meaning. In English it can be written as "other empty" or "other emptiness" or "emptiness of other".

It was originally coined by the Tibetan yogin Yumowa Mikyo Dorje whose followers became known as the Jonang school. And it was later brought into mainstream use by a throne holder of the Jonang school, Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen. After that, it was used in two ways. Firstly, it was used as a name for other emptiness, the situation of being empty of other. Secondly, it was used as a proper name for both the system of teachings that taught being other emptiness and the schools which followed that teaching.

The source of the name "empty of other" has been used to claim that the system of Other Emptiness is not valid. Because the name was a Tibetan invention, the opponents of Other Emptiness have been quick to point out that the name was not used by the Buddha, therefore the teaching could not be valid. However, their argument is simplistic—when the teachings of the third turning given by the Buddha and by his personally appointed regent, Maitreya, are carefully examined, the meaning "empty of other" is clearly visible within in them, even if the exact phrase is not used. For example, the *Highest Continuum* by Maitreya, says:

> The element, sugatagarbha, is empty of that which
> has the characteristic of being separable
> The adventitious stains ...

The phrase there, "sugatagarbha is empty of that which has the characteristic of being separable", is equivalent to "sugatagarbha is empty of that which has the characteristic of being separable because its entity is other than that of sugatagarbha", which is the meaning exactly of "empty of other".

When "other emptiness" is used as the name for a type of emptiness, it is used in a specific way. Emptiness of self was taught in relation to all persons and all phenomena, whereas emptiness of other was only taught in relation to the core of mind, sugatagarbha. The exact meaning of the emptiness of other, then, is that "the element of innate wisdom present in every being as the sugatagarbha is *empty of* everything which is *other* than its own entity". And note that, when Yumowa Mikyo Dorje first used the Tibetan words "empty of other", that is exactly how he used them.

When Other Emptiness is used as the name of a teaching, it refers to a very profound teaching focussed on wisdom which can be found in both the third and fourth turnings of the wheel of dharma. It is generally understood that the third turning teaches that there is a seed of enlightenment in all sentient beings and because of that all sentient beings can become enlightened. Other Emptiness goes further by also accepting that certain sūtras of the third turning, called "the heart meaning sūtras"[25] point out that the seed of enlightenment is wisdom which could be accessed directly. The reason for that is that the entity of sugatagarbha does not have the entity of samsaric mind in it.

The samsaric mind that pops up on the surface of wisdom and disappears again is a surface event which is not part of the wisdom itself. Therefore, it is referred to in the third turning

[25] Followers of Other Emptiness generally accept twenty, sometimes reduced to a short list of ten, sūtras which for them show the heart meaning of all the Buddha's sūtras. They are therefore called the "the group of heart meaning sūtras".

sūtras as the "adventitious stains" appearing on the surface of sugatagarbha. Saying that it is an "adventitious" stain on the surface of sugatagarbha is equivalent to saying that it is other than the entity of wisdom. The fact that wisdom is empty of what is other than it means that adventitious samsaric mind can simply be dropped and wisdom can be emptied. However, emptying it of what is in essence a fiction does not mean that there is nothing left. The process of emptying results in wisdom becoming manifest.

The real teaching of Other Emptiness is that wisdom exists and can be manifested. It is shown clearly in a set of three verses in the *Highest Continuum*, one of which contains the line quoted just above:

> The superfact of self-arising occurrence
> Is what the faithful are to realize.
> The sun's disk blazing with light
> Being seen without the eye, there is no seeing.
>
> For this, there is nothing at all to be removed
> And not the slightest thing to be added.
> If an authentic view applied to the authentic itself
> Results in its being authentically seen, there is
> complete liberation.
>
> The element, sugatagarbha, is empty of that which
> has the characteristic of being separable,
> The adventitious stains; it is not that it is empty
> Of that which has the characteristic of being
> inseparable,
> The unsurpassable dharmas.

In short, if you say it directly, the one thing that spiritually inclined entient beings must do is realize the self-existing, superior fact of reality. They must see their own wisdom which blazes brilliant as the sun. This happens by wisdom seeing itself, not the usual process of seeing with the eyes. In order for wisdom to see itself, the path of meditation to be followed is one in which nothing is to be eliminated and nothing is to be newly added; the wisdom is allowed simply to realize itself. That sort of path will work precisely because the things which are normally regarded as something to be removed—all the superficial slime and muck of samsara—is not really part of the wisdom and hence can be allowed to subside of itself and because the things which are normally regarded as something to be developed through practising the spiritual path—all the unsurpassable good qualities of enlightened being—are contained within the wisdom already, so can simply be allowed to manifest.

The ultimate summation is found in two very famous lines from the *Hevajra Tantra*:

> Sentient beings are buddha itself,
> But are obscured by adventitious stains.

Two Emptinesses are an Essential Part of the Other Emptiness Teaching

A crucial point about the Other Emptiness system of teaching is that it does not reject the emptiness of self taught in the second turning of the wheel in favour of the emptiness of other which it finds in the third turning. Instead, it regards the emptiness of self taught in the second turning as an

indispensable step towards the emptiness of other taught in the third turning. This is a key point of the view of Other Emptiness and has to be understood by anyone who wants to follow that system as a practical path to enlightenment.

Opponents of Other Emptiness claim that the system of Other Emptiness rejects the Buddha's teaching of emptiness of a self-nature in the second turning of the wheel. However, the key point just mentioned allows that argument to be immediately dismissed.

The Two Emptiness and Modes of Negation

Having understood the key point that the emptinesses taught in both the second and third turnings must be understood and practised, and in the order in which they were taught, other key points concerning the two emptinesses come to light. In this section, we look at how their ways of being ascertained using negation are different.

The sūtras of the second turning consistently teach that emptiness is to be understood and practised through the absolute negation of mistaken phenomena; for example, this can be seen in the *Heart Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* when says,

> ... no path, no wisdom, no attainment, and also no attainment ...

The sūtras of the third turning do not absolutely negate in order to remove something which is mistaken, because that step has already been completed by determining emptiness of a self-nature in the second turning. They take the next step

of negating yet affirming in order to distinguish clearly what is left after the mistaken parts have been removed.

In this two-step approach, the sūtras of the second turning will say that the core of mind which is innate wisdom, sugatagarbha, *does not truly exist*, meaning that a wisdom conceived of as a truly existent thing does not exist in fact. However, the sūtras of the third turning say, "Wisdom *truly is existent*" meaning that, of the two possibilities of wisdom existing and not-existing, it has to be said that wisdom does indeed exist.

For someone who has become used to the approach of the second turning sūtras, the words "wisdom *truly is existent*" will seem to be in direct contradiction to what the Buddha taught in the second turning, which is that phenomena *do not truly exist*. One can easily understand how someone who is clinging tightly to the style of emptiness taught in the second turning would conclude that the teachings of Other Emptiness, which emphasise the approach of saying that the core of mind, innate wisdom, does indeed exist, go directly against the Buddha's teaching. One can even see how one group might become very upset and raise cries of "heresy!" Nevertheless, one can also see that there is a progression of teaching, just as the Buddha said, and that each approach has its place and that both are equally important.

The key here is to understand that the emptiness of self is arrived at using one type of negation whereas the emptiness of other is arrived at using another type of negation. The teachings on emptiness of self negate false existence using what is called "non-affirming negation", whereas the

teachings on emptiness of the third turning differentiate whether something can be said to be a certain way or not using what is called "affirming negation". With that knowledge, one can easily understand that the Other Emptiness followers have not rejected the emptiness of self but have put that first and then, on the basis of that, have moved to a much more subtle presentation of innate wisdom which is empty of other.

Something that Ju Mipham said in his *Lamp of Certainty* draws together a number of threads here;

> The Gadan view is non-affirming negative.
> Others have affirming negative.
> What does the Early Translation school say?
> Affirming negative's negative is existent!
> If you use non-affirming negation
> Affirming negation will not help.

The Gadan is the original name for the Gelugpa school. Because they only accept that emptiness was taught in the second turning of the wheel, they only define emptiness through the use non-affirming negation. Others, meaning those schools who follow Other Emptiness other than Mipham's own Nyingma school, because they accept that emptiness was taught in both second and third turnings, start with non-affirming negation then move to affirming negation. What does his own school, the Nyingma or Early Translation school, say about this? First, it says that the negation used in affirming negation, unlike the negation used in non-affirming negation, leads to the presence, not absence of something. This is the other emptiness of the sūtras, taught in the third turning which says, "There is wisdom—that cannot be

denied!" Second, he says that, in the ultimate other emptiness of the tantras, the non-affirming negation approach actually gets in the way, and there is simply no need for it. In this approach, the practitioner enters wisdom directly, without any use of logical analysis.

A more complete presentation of the two types of negation and how they relate to the two types of emptiness—self and other—is outside the scope of this book; the reader is again referred to *Other Emptiness, a Complete Exposition of the Zhantong System* for a thorough treatment of the issue.

Summary

From this point on, the explanations of the view of Other Emptiness become more difficult to understand and require for their comprehension expertise in both the Buddha's teachings and logical argument. Nevertheless, the approach of Other Emptiness can be summed up as follows.

In general, to become enlightened means to put an end to mistaken, samsaric mind and to return to enlightened mind, called wisdom, which has been completely purified of that samsaric mind. The self-empty approach to doing that, shown in the second turning of the wheel, is one in which the samsaric mind is used against itself to overcome itself—this can lead into wisdom but only in an indirect way, because it is an approach which stays in samsaric mind while trying to end samsaric mind. The other-empty approach of the third turning acknowledges, using simple logic, that every sentient being has wisdom innately present in the form of the core of enlightened mind called sugatagarbha. Unlike the things of

samsaric mind which had to be removed in the second turning of the wheel, this is not a mistaken entity, but something which is present and could be directly accessed if one knew how to do it. The most profound teachings given by the Buddha in connection with sugatagarbha included instructions on how to access that mind directly, without the need of logic. The style of the view and meditation of those most profound sūtra teachings is the same as the view and meditation of the tantras taught in the fourth turning of the wheel. The difference between these two very profound approaches is that the sūtra teachings show them a little less clearly whereas the tantric teachings expose them fully and in the most uninhibited way possible.

As mentioned earlier, a more technical description of Other Emptiness can be found in *Other Emptiness, a Complete Exposition of the Zhantong System*. Also, *The Lion's Roar that Proclaims Zhantong*[26] by Ju Mipham has technical details of self and other emptinesses and in-depth debates with the opponents of Other Emptiness. There is also a presentation of the non-dual view of *Kālachakra Tantra* in which the Other Emptiness system is clearly exposed by the second Drukchen, Gyalwang Je[27]. Finally, *Maitripa's Writings on the View, The Main Indian Source of the Tibetan Views of Other Emptiness*[28]

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[26] Published by Padma Karpo Translation Committee, by Tony Duff, first edition, January 2010, ISBN: 978-9937-8244-6-0.

[27] ... in *A Juggernaut of the Non-Dual View, Ultimate Teachings of the Second Drukchen, Gyalwang Je* mentioned earlier.

[28] Published by Padma Karpo Translation Committee, second (continued...)

shows very clearly the view of Maitrīpa, who is the pivotal Indian source for all the Other Emptiness teachings that came into Tibet.

Disclaimer

It is important for me to say and for the reader to understand that I do not write here with a bias against one school or for another. In particular, I am not using this book as a platform to denigrate the Gelugpa school. In fact, I started my dharma journey in this life as a monk ordained in that school and was one of the founders of the first Gelugpa monastery in my homeland, Australia, where I spent many years studying and practising the Gelugpa teachings on emptiness in forest retreats. I have nothing but the greatest respect for the school's kindness. After that, I studied and practised with the Kagyu and Nyingma lineages and, likewise, have nothing but the greatest respect for them.

In this introduction I have, out of necessity, reported some events that occurred in Tibet and attitudes that accompanied them which might be less than pleasant to read but which are facts of Tibetan history. So, please do not shoot the messenger; he is simply an impartial conveyor of the message! Instead, remember that he has worked overtime to bring you the texts and information in a series of books like this one in order that a very profound aspect of the Buddha's teaching on

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[28](...continued)
edition published January 2010, author Tony Duff, ISBN: 938-9937-9031-7-2.

emptiness can be seen more clearly and better understood by non-Tibetans.

Further Study

Padma Karpo Translation Committee has amassed a range of materials to help those who are studying this and related topics. In particular several books on Other Emptiness have been published, all of which support each other and each of which clarifies another important aspect of the teaching. Please see the chapter Supports for Study at the end of the book for the details.

Sanskrit

Sanskrit terms are an important aspect of a technical book like this. They are properly rendered into English with diacritical marks. For the sake of precision, diacritical marks have been used with them throughout this book.

May we find the non-existent view
Of existence of non-existence
In which nothing whatsoever is present
Yet all of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa appears.

Tony Duff,
Swayambhunath,
Nepal,
September, 2011

THE THEORY OF OTHER EMPTINESS

In Tibet, there was a large group of followers of the Middle Way who called themselves followers of the Other Emptiness Middle Way school of thought. They explained that their system includes not one but two types of Middle Way, one called Self Emptiness[29] and one called Other Emptiness[30]. Other Tibetan followers of the Middle Way did not make this distinction into two types of Middle Way and did not even use these terms "Self Emptiness" and "Other Emptiness". As far as they were concerned, they just followed the Middle Way and so referred to themselves simply as followers of the Middle Way. Thus, if you are talking with others who do not follow the Other Emptiness approach, you have to put aside those two terms.

To understand the Other Emptiness school, we have to understand the two types of emptiness that the school proclaims: self and other emptiness. Self emptiness is the type of

[29] Tib. rang stong.

[30] Tib. gzhan stong.

emptiness in which something is understood to be empty of a self-entity. Other emptiness is the type of emptiness in which one thing, having a certain entity, is empty of anything that has an entity other than its own entity. Note that entity here does not mean "essence"; it means what something actually is.

The Self Emptiness system arrives at its view through the use of five main types of syllogistic reasonings presented in the Middle Way system, such as the one called "beyond having a nature of one or many", that all dharmas are "not truly existing", "not existing by way of a nature", and "not existing by way of an entity". In short, it comes to the view that, whatever else the phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa might be, they are without a self-entity. Due to this style of assertion, it is also called "Entitylessness Middle Way".

The Other Emptiness system has the view that "mind's actuality, luminosity sugatagarbha, is empty of adventitious stains." It proclaims that in several different ways; for example, it also states that "mind's actuality, luminosity sugatagarbha, is empty of the elaborations of conventions". This type of statement is made to point out that the sugatagarbha does not have in it those things which have an entity other than its own entity. In other words, what sugatagarbha is is not the same as what the adventitious stains and all elaborations of conventions are. It is other than them and thus is empty of them. In short, the sugatagarbha is empty of everything whose entity is other than its entity, and that is the meaning of the term "other emptiness".

In Other Emptiness presentations, the terms entity[31], actuality[32], and innate character[33] all point at the same thing—the very entity of mind, its actual situation, its innate character or disposition. That actuality of mind is *empty* of stains which are *other* than it, meaning that it is empty of the paraphernalia of samsaric mind, all of which are other than what it actually is. Moreover, the paraphernalia of samsaric mind can stain, that is, can temporarily obscure that mind's underlying actuality, but they cannot cause a taint which is a permanent change to it precisely because the paraphernalia are *empty of*, that is, have no *self*-nature.

What does it mean that mind's actuality, luminosity sugatagarbha, is empty of stains? When were they emptied out? The Other Emptiness system states that mind's actuality, luminosity sugatagarbha, is empty from the outset of the adventitious stains that appear on its surface. From a practitioner's un-enlightened perspective, it might be tempting to say that mind's actuality at first has stains but later becomes emptied of those stains due to their being cleansed away by practise of the path. However, that is not what is meant here. Mind's actuality is empty of the stains of the afflictions from the outset because its entity has always been, is, and always will be empty of these stains.

Similarly, what does it mean that mind's actuality, luminosity sugatagarbha, is empty of conventions? It means that it is,

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[31] Tib. ngo bo.

[32] Tib. gnas lugs.

[33] Tib. gshis.

from the outset, empty of elaborations in just the same way as it is empty, from the outset, of stains. It does not mean that mind's actuality sugatagarbha first has elaborations of conventions and in the interim, through the buddha and bodhisattvas blessings or alternatively through the force of your own meditation, that the stains gradually fall away. It is referring to the fact that mind's actuality sugatagarbha is from the outset empty of conventions which are of an entity other than it.

Let us take the idea of conventions. In a meditation session, you might enter the actuality of your own mind at which time conventions, because they are not part of the actuality of mind, would cease. In the original actuality, the conventions of both things and non-things do not exist—it is beyond all conventions. However, in post-meditation, you would not enter it because in post-meditation there is no method for not falling into conventions and because without conventions no comprehension is possible.

Now let us take the idea of elaborations. Mind's actuality being beyond all conventions and mind's actuality being free from elaborations is not quite the same but practically speaking comes down to the same thing. Why? Well, the term elaboration is used to indicate that a convention has surfaced in the mind; the term means that one or more concepts have actually been elaborated from the mind. Therefore, if mind's actuality luminosity sugatagarbha is empty of or beyond every convention—existence and non-existence, appearance and emptiness, things and non-things, and so on—then no elaborations of those conventions could surface there, could they? In sum, it has been said:

> It is that which is beyond every convention
> Because it is beyond elaborations of conventions.

Now let us take the idea of luminosity. Mind's actuality is also called "luminosity sugatagarbha". "Luminosity" is a convention. Mind's actuality is beyond conventions. Therefore, the concept that we might have of luminosity in relation to the sugatagarbha is not present in mind's actuality sugatagarbha. If mind's actuality had an extreme of luminosity in it, then the other extreme of non-luminosity would be possible in it and would have to happen. Therefore, neither luminosity or non-luminosity are there in the actuality.

The words of the previous paragraph point strongly at the actuality of mind and can be hard to understand. It would be wonderful if we could somehow drop the conventions and get right to mind's actuality beyond conventions. Unfortunately, it is very hard to do and we are stuck with the fact that without using conventions, we will not easily be able to get to an understanding of this actuality of mind. Therefore, in Other Emptiness we designate the actuality of mind with conventions like "sugatagarbha" and "luminosity" but we also make the point that these are designations only and that the actuality of mind itself has no conventions of "sugatagarbha" or "luminosity" in it. It is beyond the convention of "empty" too—it is beyond all conventions of empty, not empty, self empty, other empty, and so on.

The Other Emptiness system does not proclaim that self emptiness is one type of Middle Way understanding, other emptiness is another, and the two are separate things

unrelated to each other. The Other Emptiness Middle Way starts with the self-empty approach in which it is understood that all things, including sugatagarbha, are empty of a self, then continues to the more profound other-empty approach in which it which it is understood that there is an awareness which—conventionally speaking—does exist.

If you think this through and understand all the ramifications, you might conclude, "Isn't that enough? With it we have emptiness and an awareness of that emptiness." However, there is important point made in the tathāgatagarbha teaching, and this is where the need for other emptiness comes in—if the awareness that sees emptiness really is wisdom, it will not be a samsaric awareness that now has emptiness for its object. Mind's actuality sugatagarbha has the quality of being empty of other, meaning that it simply does not possess any of the apparatus of samsaric mind. Because mind's actuality sugatagarbha is empty of those in the particular style of being empty of entities that are other than it, it leaves room to understand that it is also full of whatever its own entity happens to be. Its own entity is the enlightened type of mind, so it contains all enlightened types of qualities. Thus, the Other Emptiness system neatly points at the wisdom of a buddha, which does not possess anything of or seen by samsaric mind but does possess everything of enlightened mind, that is, all the qualities of enlightenment or buddhahood.

Thus, there is a progression. First one works at the self emptiness understanding which is connected with the middle wheel of the three wheels of dharma. In the middle wheel, there is the idea that the objects known by mind are in an

obscured condition, therefore, using logical process, one removes the obscuration from each object, one by one. Then, in the final turning of the wheel, one comes to an understanding that, although all samsaric things might be ultimately non-existent, there is a wisdom knower that exists and is free of all obscurations to the entire zone of dharmas[34].

How the Two Types of Emptiness are Validly Known

Most generally speaking, there are only two types of awareness or knower: un-enlightened samsaric mind and its events and the wisdom mind of a buddha. This fundamental division into two types of knower is well-known throughout Buddhism. Nevertheless, to see it stated in one of the sūtras used as a scriptural support by the Other Emptiness system, the Buddha taught in the *Descent Into Laṅkā Sūtra* that "awareness is of two types, the fictional mind of conceptualized phenomena (dharmins) and the luminosity mind of the nature of phenomena (dharmatā)". The first refers to samsaric mind which solidifies everything so that phenomena (dharmas) are not merely phenomena but are conceptually overloaded with an accounting of what they are (dharmins). The second is the actuality of that mind, which is the wisdom of a buddha.

The self-empty approach uses samsaric mind and its events to study itself; therefore, a study of how samsaric mind works and, in particular, how it can be made to have valid knowledge of what it is viewing is a very important part of the self emptiness approach.

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34 Skt. dharmadhātu.

For an ordinary person, the type of thought commonly used to understand something is the general discursive thought of samsaric mind. It usually does not come with the correct logical reasoning needed to have valid knowledge of how something is. However, it is possible to develop a better type of samsaric mind, one which has the quality of making a correct decision when it is used. This type of mind was called "prajñā" in ancient India, literally meaning "best type of knowing". In English, it is probably better to think of it as "correctly discriminating mind", which is how it is defined in Indian and Tibetan texts on mind and its operation.

In order to develop a correctly discriminating mind, mind can be trained so that discursive thought arises based on correct logical reasoning, as happens for example when thought is trained to follow the valid forms of logic called syllogisms. When thought follows a line of reason and ends up with a correct conclusion, in which something has been validly known, the approach to the knowledge gained is called inference and the valid knowledge that results is called a valid cognition. In Sanskrit, it is called "pramāṇa", meaning "best type of mental operation". Thus, there is there valid cognition which comes through the use of inference, and that is called inferential valid cognition. Again, inferential valid cognition is logical thought process which arrives at correct knowledge of what it is analyzing.

The Other Emptiness approach does not use samsaric mind and its events to study itself. It bypasses that in favour of directly accessing wisdom. Wisdom does not have the process of discursive thought in it and to emphasize that feature is also called "no-thought wisdom". Therefore, unlike

samsaric mind which uses thought to know about things, wisdom mind simply knows what is, as it is, and without any thought involved. This process of knowing through direct perception is never mistaken, never confused, and never has any of the deluded and confused knowing of the samsaric type of mind. Therefore, it is referred to as a valid cognizer—anything known by it will be correct, without further question. It is a "direct perception valid cognizer".

Inferential valid cognition relies on reasonings such as syllogisms based on the mere conventions belonging to fictional truth. Nevertheless, the second turning of the wheel when setting out the self-empty approach says that it is capable of arriving at a determination of the actuality of mind. That is how it is said. However, the third turning of the wheel when setting out the other empty approach says that this method cannot be used to arrive at a determination of the ultimate actuality of mind because the ultimate actuality of mind is beyond every convention and cannot be engaged using the elaborations of conventions on which inferential valid cognition depends.

If this is discussed in terms of prajñā, which was defined above, a worldly person's prajñās of hearing, contemplating, and meditating are aroused in a process involving thought. Because of the thought involved, it is contradictory to no-thought wisdom and hence cannot give birth to realization that is directly perceiving mind's actuality, sugatagarbha. Therefore, the third turning sūtras which teach mind's actuality sugatagarbha deem it to be out of the reach of the worldly hearing, contemplation, and meditation prajñā. A

sūtra records that this was taught by the Buddha when he said:

> The buddhahood that is the realm of all-seeing
> wisdom
> Is not the object of the three awarenesses[35].
> Therefore, bodied beings must understand that
> wisdom
> Is beyond the range of concept.

They teach that mind's actuality sugatagarbha has to see its own face in direct perception. This is done using prajñā which is beyond the world, prajñā which is the wisdom itself. It is very important to understand the difference between a thought-based prajñā of samsaric mind which is seeing emptiness of self and a no-thought-based prajñā of wisdom which is seeing what can be called emptiness of other, but which in fact is the entirety of wisdom. Wisdom simultaneously sees the space-like emptiness of all the phenomena it knows and all of those phenomena, which includes all of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. Moreover, it has with it all of the good qualities of the wisdom entity, which is the same as saying that it has all of the good qualities of enlightenment, too.

The Process of Perception in Relation to Seeing Mind's Actuality, Sugatagarbha

In the normal perceptual process of an ordinary person, there is first a direct sense perception. This is not a wisdom direct perception—it is a perception occurring within the framework of samsaric mind without the involvement of discursive

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[35] The three prajñās of hearing, contemplating, and meditating.

thought. In the next moment, a structure of thought or a concept, specifically called a generality is created to represent the actual object of the initial moment of direct perception. The generality is then used to think about the actual object whenever the process of thought is being used to consider it. Then, various conventions of names, words, images, and so on are created amongst people to have a common basis for communication about that same thing.

When an ordinary person thinks about a specific thing, the generality is used to refer to it in the thinking process. However, the confusion of samsaric mind causes the generality to be confused with the actual thing, then a relatively unclear image of the actual thing appears to the thinking mind. Because of the confusion that comes with generalities, the use of conventions to discuss or present something, followed by the process of studying it with ordinary thought, will mean that the thing being studied will be neither directly nor clearly seen.

Thus, when trying to understand mind's actuality as presented by the Other Emptiness system, you first read the conventions on this page. From that, you understand the names that the Other Emptiness system gives to mind's actuality—"mind's actuality luminosity sugatagarbha", "the awareness belonging to mind's actuality", "luminosity awareness", and "sugatagarbha awareness". When your discursive thought tries to understand the basis to which these conventions of names and words apply, it uses the concepts called

generalities[36]. When the discursive thought that consists of these generalities and the actual thing of mind's actuality are mixed in together through the general confusion of samsaric mind, it becomes impossible to realize the actuality of the mind that you wish to know, because it is being obscured by the process that uses the generalities.

The approach of the middle turning in which logic is used to remove mistakes from phenomena, relies on these generalities. Through a process of logical negation and affirmation, it arrives at correct decisions over what is. When the reasonings of the Middle Way are used to conduct the logical negation and affirmation, the wrong concepts of samsaric mind are negated one by one. The result is an emptiness of those wrong concepts, an emptiness of self-nature, seen by prajñā operating within samsaric mind. Therefore, the emptiness seen is not the no-thought wisdom which is mind's actuality sugatagarbha.

The Other Emptiness system uses that first step to develop the samsaric mind so that it works better. It uses that first step to empty out the mistake of ignorance. However, it does not arrive at no-thought wisdom. To do that, everything other than no-thought wisdom must be emptied out of no-thought wisdom and that is the meaning of the teaching called Other Emptiness. This second step requires no logical analysis, it requires stepping into the ultimate situation of mind directly, which I have been referring to here as "mind's actuality". Yogins who discover the mind's actuality via

[36] Tib. spyi mtshan.

prajñā born of non-conceptual meditation go to the ultimate without any conventions. If their meditation apprehends something having conventions or elaborations, it is not realizing mind's nature luminosity sugatagarbha but is conceptually comprehending obscurations.

A SONG OF MILAREPA: AN AUTHENTIC EXPRESSION OF THE MIDDLE WAY

I heard that, at one time, the great Jetsun whose name Glorious Laughing Vajra was known everywhere, the yogin at the head of all other yogins, Milarepa, was residing at Chubar in his nirmāṇakāya fortress[37] together with a great assembly of wisdom deities who were none other than the maṇḍala of his own enlightened body, speech, mind, and great bliss.

At that time, the haughty generals of the eight classes of neither-gods-nor-demons[38], each one accompanied by troops of his own type, and women ḍākinīs as translators[39], appearing

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[37] "His nirmāṇakāya fortress" is a highly honorific way of saying "his enlightened body".

[38] These eight classes are listed in the *Illuminator Tibetan-English Dictionary*. "Neither gods nor demons" indicates that it is a group consisting of both gods and demons. The gods in the group are from the desire realm gods and the demons are various, powerful pretas.

[39] There are two groups here: the first group is the group of (continued...)

in youthful and charmingly beautiful form, fully bedecked with robes flapping in the wind, various gems, long Doshal necklaces jingling, Semodo necklaces[40], and so on, and accompanied by their many retinues of servants and assistants, all came into space before the Jetsun.

Then the neither-gods-nor demons let fall a rain of various flowers on him, made offerings of worship of various incenses and music to him, and set forth an array of the finest foods and comestibles before him, and then petitioned him with the request, "Jetsun, please give us neither-gods-nor-demons assembled here a teaching of definitive dharma concerning the statement "There is nothing else except for this place led to by the ultimate path", one that will show the extent of realization that has come into your enlightened mind, the understanding of the buddhas of the three times.

[39](...continued)
neither gods nor demons; the second is the five Tseringma sisters who have a close connection to Milarepa and who have come to assist with the dharma teaching the neither gods nor demons wish to request of Milarepa. The remainder of this sentence is a description of the five Tseringma sisters.

[40] In Indian culture, women wear three necklaces to beautify themselves: a very long one down to the navel called Doshal in Tibetan; a shorter one down to the breasts called Semodo in Tibetan; and one not mentioned here which drapes down to the neck only.

At that time, the Jetsun composed a dohā[41] of the view which expressed his extent of realization. He prefaced it by saying, "These are definitive meaning instructions[42] concerning actuality[43] and only that", then sang:

> At the border of the countries of Nepal and Tibet,
> There is the very wondrous place of Dingma Drin
> Whose markets have merchandise fulfilling the nine desires[44].
> The medicinal lady, a virtuous practitioner who brings on glory,
> Dwells here as the queen of the splendid snowy tracts,
> With her tresses of hair that hold the svastika of long life[45];

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[41] For dohā, see the glossary.

[42] A definitive meaning teaching is one that explains its subject exactly as it is, with no meaning hidden by using a less than direct way of explaining the matter.

[43] Actuality means things as they actually sit, reality as it is. For actuality, see the glossary.

[44] Counting three types of beings in each of the three realms of saṃsāra, one gets nine kinds of beings, each with their own desires. Thus, "the nine desires" is a way of saying "every possible desire of beings".

[45] Tashi Tseringma or "Auspicious Long-Life Lady" was the leading sister of five spirits who lived in the area and who had become Milarepa's consorts for his practice of karmamudrā. He speaks here with affection for her, first calling her medicinal lady (continued...)

Her name pleasing to the ear is Tashi Tseringma[46].
In the mountains the mists gather to the left
Swirling around the snowy peak of Dogma
Yanggang—
Isn't this the medicinal valley of Chubar?

I am the one called Milarepa,
The man who practises yoga one-pointedly, aren't
I?!
You are the ones who, up till now, have belittled me
And ridiculed me with derisive laughter—
The worldly neither-gods-nor-demons
Extremely haughty and unruly
Who have assembled here today in front of me
Because I have sought complete success in yoga,
aren't you?!

At the time of the early winter months,
Five mind-ravishingly beautiful girls
Aroused the mind for supreme unsurpassed
enlightenment
And swore to give whichever siddhis were desired,

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[45](...continued)
because of her capacity to give the energy of longevity. Then he calls her the virtuous practitioner who brings on glory in reference to her role as a consort which starts up wisdom in the male partner and hence initiates the glory of enlightenment in both. He mentions svastika, which means both "firmness" and "auspiciousness", again in relation to her ability to provide life and virility.

[46] Auspicious Long-life.

Then, flying off into the sky out of sight,
disappeared.[47]
Once again you amazing five have appeared
In the winter night's brilliant moonlight
As ladies so excellent as to be manifestations,
Having assumed a charming form of dance,
With robes fluttering in the wind,
And beautified by the Doshal necklace.
Leading lady you flattered me then
The haughty neither-gods-nor-spirits of the eight
classes
Accompanied by their armies, regiments, soldiers,
And retinues of the same type made offerings
Of clouds of offerings filling the sky,
Of food with hundreds of flavours, and
Of various kinds of music,
Then petitioned me for the definitive
understanding.
You are the troublesome gods and ghosts of
appearance and becoming[48] aren't you?
If you are the ones who spoke such words, then you
must listen here!
If I am to explain with true speech, then each of you
listen!
Now stop all your noise and listen to this song!

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[47] This refers to the original meeting of Milarepa and the five sisters.

[48] For appearance and becoming, see the glossary. Here it means "of cyclic existence in general".

Generally, the sentient beings of three-realmed
saṃsāra
Have various kinds of enlightenment that they
assert.
There are dualistic views that grasp at an I and
There are the various ways of behaviour that go
with them;
There are, based on viewing a self, very many
indeed.[49]

Complying with your type of mind, you ones
Of lesser mental ability, the all-knowing Buddha
Did teach that "everything exists".[50]

From the standpoint of the superfactual truth[51],
There are no, let alone blockages, even buddhas
themselves—
There are no meditators and no meditations,

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[49] This set of five lines covers the views of worldly beings. Despite their beliefs in various types of religious systems and modes of behaviour that go with them, their views can be summed up as belief in self-nature in phenomena and beings.

[50] Here, Milarepa is talking directly to the assembled spirits who have requested the teaching. They like to think they are smart but in fact their mental capacity is not high. They are like the criminal elements of the human world who can be very smart at crime but who have only a dull, thug-like intelligence. This set of three lines covers the Buddha's first level of teaching, in which he stated that things do exist, even though they do not, teaching that was given for beings of a lesser level of intelligence.

[51] For fictional and superfactual, see the glossary.

No levels to be traversed and no signs of the path[52],
No fruition kāyas and wisdoms[53]—
Therefore there is no nirvāṇa,
Just designations made with names and words.
The three realms of inanimate and animate[54]
Are primordially not produced, they have no birth,
There is no base, no co-emergent birth,
There is no karma and no karmic maturation,
Therefore saṃsāra's name also does not exist—
That's what there is in what is ultimate.
My goodness! If sentient beings were non-existent,
From where would the buddhas of the three times
arise?
Without cause, fruition is impossible,
So from the standpoint of the fictional truth:
The Capable One[55] taught
"Everything—saṃsāra and nirvāṇa—exists."
Existence appearing as things and
Non-existence, their inner reality of emptiness,
Both are inseparable in entity, of one taste, thus
Self-knowing and other-knowing are non-existent
and
Everything is a unification vast and open.
The experts who realize it that way

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[52] ... meaning no signs of progress on a path to be followed ...

[53] For kāyas and wisdoms, see the glossary.

[54] Tib. brtan g.yo. The animate and inanimate is a stock phrase used to sum up the entirety of cyclic existence.

[55] For Capable One, see the glossary.

Do not see consciousness, they see wisdom,
Do not see sentient beings, they see buddhas,
Do not see dharmins[56], they see reality.
Compassion's force drawn forth from that is
What the good qualities of the buddhas are—
The strengths, fearlessnesses, retentions, and so on,
Originating in the manner of a precious jewel.

That for me the yogin is the extent of my
realization.
You troublesome gods and ghosts assembled heard
Profound dharma but it was just evanescent sound.
In the kingdom of Abhira[57]
The clever ones outsmart the stupid ones;
The foxes roaming the charnel grounds
Are scared and frightened by the lion's roar.[58]
If there are some fortunate ones here,
They will be liberated through hearing this.
Altogether, humans have taken delight in,
Taken joy in, been pleased with me! Sudden
victory!

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[56] For dharmins, see the glossary. A dharmin is a dharma known in the consciousness of dualistic mind. Any being who is seeing dharmins is by definition not seeing non-dualistic reality.

[57] Abhirati is the name of the eastern nirmāṇakāya buddha-field.

[58] He is saying, "The smarter ones among you troublesome types clever as foxes outsmart the more stupid ones among you. However, like foxes, you all run and hide when someone like myself roars the lion's roar of the ultimate proclamation of the view of the third turning of the wheel of dharma.

Having taught that way in that dohā, he explained the meanings involved. Generally speaking, all teaching of the eighty-four thousand-fold dharma heap given by the teacher, the Buddha, was always given in the form of various vehicles in order for the teaching to conform to the type of mind of the persons being tamed. Nevertheless, there is nothing else except for the one place led to by the ultimate path[59]. That single destination is the uncontrived dharmatā[60]. Understanding what it is like does not bring liberation; it has to be manifested through training on the path. And that path is the unification of emptiness and compassion. There are inconceivably many ways to traverse the path yet, if they are reduced down to their essence, they are unifying method and prajñā or making the two truths inseparable, so please do that.

He instructed them in those words and Tashi Tseringma and the others, the world with its gods, men, asuras, and gandharvas, rejoiced, truly praising what the great Jetsun had said.

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[59] There are many different ways of teaching enlightenment but in the end, there is no teaching other than the one corresponding to the ultimate path. All other teachings are merely provisional techniques for bringing the beings to be tamed onto that ultimate path. The main request of the neither-gods-nor-demons was an explanation of this point, so he is repeating and summing it up it here.

[60] For dharmatā, see the glossary. Here and in the remainder of this book, it always refers to the actual situation of reality, how things actually are.

That completes the dohā of the view of the great Jetsun, Laughing Vajra, named "An Authentic Expression of the Middle Way".

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF OTHER EMPTINESS UNDERSTOOD THROUGH "AN AUTHENTIC EXPRESSION OF THE MIDDLE WAY"

The song begins with a prologue which reveals the circumstance of this teaching on the view. The actual teaching begins with the lines:

> Generally, the sentient beings of three-realmed
> saṃsāra
> Have various kinds of enlightenment that they
> assert.
> There are dualistic views that grasp at an I and
> There are the various ways of behaviour that go
> with them;
> There are, based on viewing a self, very many
> indeed.

These lines explain mistaken, worldly views. These lines will not be explained further here, though they are explained at length in the Drukchen Padma Karpo's explanation of this whole song, called *Clarification Made Using Three Textual Systems of the Middle Way, "A Chariot Which Accomplishes the Definitive Meaning"*.

The rest of the teaching in the song sets out the view that transcends worldly views taught by the Buddha. The view is taught in a two-step progression. The first step sets out the views connected with the middle turning of the wheel—the Autonomy[61] and Consequence Middle Ways[62]. The second step sets out the view connected with the third turning of the wheel of sūtra and the fourth turning of the wheel of tantra, the view of Other Emptiness. Padma Karpo, in the text mentioned just above, skilfully uses Nāgārjuna's *Root Prajñā*[63] to explain the first step and Chandrakīrti's *Entrance to the Middle Way*[64] to explain the second.

The first step, covered by the lines "From the standpoint of the superfactual truth" down to "Everything is a unification vast and open", present the understanding of the middle turning of the wheel as expressed by the Autonomy and Consequence Middle Ways. Milarepa says that saṃsāra and nirvāṇa do not exist in the superfactual level of truth but do exist in fictional truth as mere designations made with names and words which is the view of the middle turning as stated by Middle Way.

The second step, covered by the lines "The experts who realize it that way" down to "Arise in the manner of a

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61 Skt. svatāntrika madhyamaka.

62 Skt. prasaṅgika madhyamaka.

63 Skt. mula prajñā.

64 Skt. madhyamakāvatāra.

precious jewel" accords with the Other Emptiness Middle Way[65]. The line "Do not see consciousness, they see wisdom" means that consciousness, being empty of a self-entity is self-empty, so is not seen, whereas wisdom, not being empty of its own entity is other empty, so is seen.

1. The Self Emptiness View

This "wisdom is empty of other" way of talking is saying that self-arising wisdom—which in Other Emptiness is also called "the actuality of mind, luminosity[66]" and "the actuality of mind, sugatagarbha" and which in the tantras is called "self-arising rigpa[67]" or any of many other names—has no stains in its entity, that its entity is primordially pure. It is, therefore, empty of other, meaning that it is empty of stains which are other than it. Moreover, the specific mode of its being empty is that it is empty of conventions—there are no names in its entity.

Thus, the reasoning behind saying that wisdom is "other-empty" is that mind's actuality, luminosity, is empty of stains, empty of conventions. And the reasoning behind saying that consciousness is "self-empty" is that consciousness—which in this case means an outwardly-directed, saṃsāric consciousness—is that it is empty of or has no self-entity. That lack of self-entity is called self-emptiness.

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[65] Tib. gzhan stong dbu ma.

[66] For actuality and luminosity, see the glossary.

[67] For rigpa, see the glossary.

Another of Milarepa's songs, *The Mahāmudrā Distinguishing Provisional and Definitive*, says that,

> This internally moving mental consciousness
> When not realized is not knowing,
> The root and basis of all karma and affliction[68];
> If realized, it is self-knowing wisdom
> And the white qualities are fully produced.
> In the ultimate there is no wisdom ...

The statement "In the ultimate there is no wisdom" means that wisdom is not a product, not a compounded phenomenon, and is made in accordance with the view of the middle turning. On the other hand, the statement "Do not see consciousness, they see wisdom" which appears further on is saying that wisdom does exist. These statements seem to be contradictory but there is no contradiction because the two are made on relation to differing types of emptiness, the first in relation to self-emptiness and the second in relation to other emptiness.

An Authentic Expression of the Middle Way starts out by stating that there is no karma, no path, and no wisdom in the ultimate. Like the quotation given just above from *The Mahāmudrā Distinguishing Provisional and Definitive*, it is made according to the intent of the middle turning. However, the later statement "Do not see consciousness, they see wisdom" is

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[68] There is a very clever play on words in this line which cannot be rendered in English. It has the explicit meaning shown but also means that that consciousness referred to in the previous two lines is the "root, the ālaya of karma and affliction" which is the seventh consciousness according to the Mind Only school.

being made according to the other empty approach of the third turning and fourth turnings.

The Mahāmudrā Distinguishing Provisional and Definitive starts by giving the non-realized situation, then gives the realized situation, and finally gives the ultimate situation for each of the external object, the internal grasping mental consciousness, the form skandha that attracts suffering, and lastly the appearances of male and female harmful spirits and yakṣhas. All of that is given according to the intent of the middle turning. Following that it says,

> ... clears the murkiness from rigpa's water-moon.
> The sun of luminosity, free from clouds ...

which, like "Do not see consciousness, they see wisdom", is made according to the perspective of other emptiness. How is that? A moon appearing on the surface of a pool of water is a metaphor that uses the simile of reflection to illustrate the luminosity that is mind's actuality. The murkiness is a metaphor for the outwardly-directed style of fictional mind, a style of knowing which does not see clearly. The sun of luminosity is wisdom and the clouds are a metaphor for confused consciousness. Thus, and as with *An Authentic Expression of the Middle Way*, the first part of *The Mahāmudrā Distinguishing Provisional and Definitive* song accords with the middle turning and the part following it accords with the third turning of the sūtras and the fourth turning of the tantras.

There is a reason for having this sort of approach in which there are two, apparently contradictory explanations. At the time of establishing the view that involves cutting off

elaborations[69], the profound Self emptiness system applies and at the time of meditating in equipoise that enables wisdom knowledge, the profound Other Emptiness system applies.

An Authentic Expression of the Middle Way says,

> From the standpoint of the superfactual truth:
> There are no, let alone blockages, even buddhas
> themselves—
> There are no meditators and no meditations,
> No levels to be traversed and no signs of the path,
> No fruition kāyas and wisdoms,
> Therefore there is no nirvāṇa ...

Nirvāṇa is the subject of the argument. The thesis is that it does not exist in mind's actuality, meaning in ultimate truth. The reasons for that are as follows. Not only do blockages not exist in the superfactual, but buddhas also do not exist in it. There are no meditators in it so there are also no meditations that they would meditate upon. Because there are no meditations there are no levels to be traversed and no signs of traversing the path leading through those levels. Because of that, there are no fruition kāyas and wisdoms existing. Therefore, with that as the reason, Milarepa states that there is no nirvāṇa that could be authentically established to be existing there. This reasoning can be done forwards, as just illustrated, and, starting with there being no fruition kāyas and wisdoms because there is no nirvāṇa authentically established, it can also be done in reverse.

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[69] For elaboration, see the glossary.

Well then, what is there in the authentic? There are

> Just designations made with names and words ...

All of whatever is there in saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are just designations made with names and words. The statement "There is no nirvāṇa" is being made from the ultimate point of view which has to be understood as meaning that it is beyond both existence and non-existence.

Now, for the way that saṃsāra does not exist, he says,

> The three realms of inanimate and animate
> Are primordially not produced, they have no birth,
> There is no base, no co-emergent birth,
> There is no karma and no karmic maturation,
> Therefore saṃsāra's name also does not exist ...

The three realms are the desire realm, the form realm, and the formless realms. The inanimate are the worlds such as planets on which the animate, the sentient beings, live. From the outset, all of them have not come into being by way of having a fixed entity. They are, for example, like the appearances of a dream. As a dream progresses, the appearances in it do not start out as truly existing then later become not truly existing; they are always not truly existing by way of a self entity. Similarly, the three realms with inanimate and animate are primordially not produced or, you can say, born. Furthermore, there is no root or basis from which the three realms are produced or born. For example, it is like this planet that we live on and the space it abides in; that space in having no up, down, left, or right to it has no sort of continuity in it from one thing to another so the planet does not come from the space. The three realms also have no

coemergent birth; it is usually said that the inanimate arises first as a support and the animate arise after that but in the superfactual there is no time so not only do they not come one after the other but they also do not arise co-emergently. There is no karma; if there is no self, there is no karma because to have selflessness and karma is a contradiction. If there is no self, karma also is not produced. If there is no karma, then there is also no maturation of karma. Having stated those reasons, it follows that saṃsāra's name also does not exist; the basis for imputing the name saṃsāra having been shown to be not existing at the level of the authentic, the name saṃsāra also has no existence anywhere at all.

The *Heart Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* says that the five skandhas are empty, a statement that follows the view of the authentic. Now to say that the five skandhas are empty is the same as saying that saṃsāra is empty and in regard to that, the *Heart Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* says that there is:

> ... no ignorance, no end of ignorance up to no old
> age, birth, and death ...

in order to say that saṃsāra is not truly established. Thus Milarepa says,

> That's what there is in what is ultimate ...

and with that is saying that, from the standpoint of the ultimate, actuality, not only is the basis of designation for saṃsāra not established but also the name is not established and that is the sort of thing that you will find there.

Then he says,

> My goodness! If sentient beings were non-existent,
> From where would the buddhas of the three times
> arise?
> Without cause, fruition is impossible,
> So from the standpoint of the fictional truth:
> The Capable One[70] taught
> "Everything—saṃsāra and nirvāṇa—exists."

In this, when he says, "My goodness! If sentient beings were non-existent, from where would the buddhas of the three times arise?", he means that, if there were no sentient beings, then there also would be no buddhas. And when he says, "Without cause ... exists", he is saying that there is saṃsāra, there is nirvāṇa, there are buddhas, there are sentient beings. The Capable One himself has said that there are creators of karma and karmic results so everything does exist.

Then Milarepa says,

> Existence appearing as things and
> Non-existence, their inner reality of emptiness,
> Both are inseparable in entity, of one taste, thus
> Self-knowing and other-knowing are non-existent
> and
> Everything is a unification vast and open.

"Existence" means the various things—sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches—that appear. They appear in a dream-like way. These things are also non-existent in that what they are at core is emptiness. Discursive thought takes the emptiness

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[70] For Capable One, see the glossary.

and pigeon-holes it in many ways, seeing those as individually existing items. Although discursive thought takes all of the existent things as being different still, in the essence which is their actuality, they are inseparable. Their being inseparable in their essence is referred to by saying that they are of one taste. Mind or you can say knowing, both knows itself in that it can know its own essence and knows external things—sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches—which are other than it. Neither of these two types of knowing—self-knowing and other-knowing—are existent as such in the authentic; there they are appearance-emptiness or you can say knowing-emptiness, unified. All dharmas are appearance-emptiness unified. This appearance-emptiness is vast and open.

As explained earlier, the song up to this point has been in accord with the self-empty intent of the middle turning. This is as expressed in the *Heart Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, that "all dharmas from form up to omniscience are not established". According to the Autonomy Middle Way, all dharmas from form up to omniscience are asserted to be empty which is done for the purpose of stopping true existence, and similarly, are asserted to be free from elaboration which is done for the purpose of stopping elaboration. The Consequence Middle Way system on the other hand does not assert emptiness that stops true existence and does not assert freedom from elaboration that stops elaboration. That is a difference between the two self-empty schools.

2. The Other Emptiness View

The song continues with a presentation of the view which accords with the third and fourth turnings of the wheel. It represents the Other Emptiness Middle Way of the sutra teachings as well as the Vajra Vehicle teachings of the Mahāmudrā and Mahā Ati traditions. Milarepa says,

> The experts who realize it that way
> Do not see consciousness, they see wisdom,

"Experts" here refers to the noble ones[71]. They have become experts when it comes to realization. They are the ones who have realized the superfactual situation in direct perception. "Realized it that way" means that they have a realization according to what was mentioned in the preceding lines.

Generally, consciousness is an outwardly-directed awareness; it belongs to mind, which is confused[72]. Wisdom is an inwardly-directed awareness, and is non-confused. Outwardly-directed consciousness mentioned is empty of a self, so does not come into existence by way of a self-entity. Wisdom is the actuality of that outwardly-directed consciousness or you can say that it is the nature of mind, luminosity[73]. The entity of the nature, luminosity, is said to be empty of stains because it has possesses none of the stains of dualistic mind. It is also

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[71] For noble one, see the glossary.

[72] For awareness and confusion, see the glossary.

[73] Luminosity is a metaphor for knowing. The nature of mind is purely knowing.

said to be empty of conventions such as things, non-things, stoppage, production, and so on. The Other Emptiness system defines wisdom in the way just shown.

When the Other Emptiness system says that wisdom is empty, in what way does it mean it to be empty? The system means that the entity wisdom is empty of stains in that it has, from the very beginning, nothing that is other than itself, nothing which is foreign to it, in its entity. That being so, it is empty of all samsaric states of mind that would be stains on it, such as the afflictions, and of all aspects of dualistic mind, such as the elaborations of conventions. In the sūtra system, this "empty wisdom" is called "the no-thought wisdom of equipoise that sees its own entity". In the manner of something which has neither something to be emptied nor something doing the emptying, it sees its own entity in direct perception. That, in other emptiness, is the only way in which it is described as being empty; there is no description of it having to be dualistically emptied at all. For as long as the outwardly-directed consciousness has not been emptied, meaning removed, from the wisdom, the prajñā which sees the superfactual cannot remove consciousness because wisdom is seen in direct perception in a manner is which is there is no seer and seen.

An Autonomy Middle Way follower is able to see that consciousness is empty of a self because of seeing it to be a mere emptiness, like wide-open space. The Consequence Middle Way follower realizes consciousness as being nothing whatsoever because of seeing that consciousness is beyond any sort of conceptual elaborations which would otherwise cause it to be a mere emptiness. The type of emptiness that he realizes

is a non-affirming negation. In the sense that the emptiness he realizes involves no conceptual elaboration whatsoever, it can be said to be nothing at all. The noble ones see wisdom in direct perception because of seeing it in a manner which is beyond a seer and seen.

Milarepa's song continues with,

> Do not see sentient beings, they see buddhas ...

Why do they "not see sentient beings"? A sentient being is one who, dominated by ignorance, has a confused mind to which various confused appearances appear. If the confused appearances are said not to exist by way of a nature and the confused mind likewise, then sentient being's actuality is not existent because of which sentient beings can be said to not be seen. In other words, they do not see sentient beings because sentient beings' actuality is not established in the authentic. Or, they do not see sentient beings in the authentic because, no matter what confused appearance there might be, it is has no essence to it.

As for "they see buddhas", sentient beings' actuality when analyzed by prajñā is not established and this ultimate actuality is buddha. The mind's ultimacy which is described with conventions such as "sugatagarbha" is the superfactual buddha, so he says that the superfactual buddha is seen. The well-known lines from *Hevajra Tantra*'s two parts are fitting:

> Sentient beings are buddha itself
> However, they have become obscured by
> adventitious stains.

To understand this, it is necessary to define both sentient beings actuality *per se* and their ultimate actuality. Sentient beings' actuality *per se* is emptiness alone; sentient beings' ultimate actuality is their nature, completely pure buddha. However, the obscurative nature of sentient beings' adventitious stains prevents sight of those two actualities. Therefore, even though the nature of sentient beings is buddha itself, while sentient beings are obscured, they are not said to be buddhas.

Furthermore, when asserting the Other Emptiness view, two different ways of presenting emptiness have to be distinguished and used. Here, sentient beings' emptiness is defined in two different ways, like this. The sentient being's absence-of-self type of emptiness is an absence-of-thing type of emptiness which is a non-affirming negation, whereas their empty-of-other type of emptiness is an absence-of-a-thing-ness[74] emptiness which is beyond non-affirming negation. The empty-of-other emptiness uses conventional statements

[74] This is clear in the Tibetan, though a little difficult to understand in English though. Here the "ness" makes it into a thing which would be discussed conventionally. The other-empty system uses affirming negations, which use conventions to make positive statements; it does not use the utter (non-affirming) negations needed in the self-empty approach to remove the view of a self. The very use of the "ness" in the other empty case where it was not used in the self-empty case, shows the whole style of the third turning of the wheel compared to the second turning of the wheel. The third turning uses conventional statements to point at that actual state of non-duality which can only be known by direct perception.

which imply existence of something to point at a person's naturally-present luminosity. Thus, Milarepa is saying that yogins do not see sentient beings in the sense of the self-empty way of sentient beings being empty, that is, the way that sentient beings' confused appearances are self-empty; instead, the actuality of sentient beings, the superfactual buddha, has become directly manifest for them and so is seen by them.

Milarepa goes on to say,

> Do not see dharmins, they see reality.

The dharmins or the phenomena known as fictional truth—which are confused appearances—are not seen. He says that confused appearances and are not seen and that reality, the dharmatā of phenomena—which is naturally present luminosity—is seen.

Seeing the"superfactual dharmatā of phenomena" or seeing "luminosity" or "that which is luminosity-emptiness inseparable" or "expanse-rigpa inseparable"—which are some of the equivalent expressions used in the Other Emptiness, Mahāmudrā, and Mahā Ati traditions to address that meaning—means that it has been made manifest and is being seen in direct perception.

All-knowing Padma Karpo wrote a very important commentary to this song of Milarepa, titled, *Clarifier of the Three Main Systems of Madhyamaka, The Chariot that Accomplishes the Definitive Meaning*. This text is regarded as very difficult but very profound. It connects the words "Do not see consciousness, they see wisdom" with the seven levels of the impure

ones—the first to seventh levels of the bodhisatvas, then connects "Do not see sentient beings, they see buddhas" with the three levels of the pure ones—the eighth, ninth, and tenth levels of the bodhisatvas; then connects "Do not see dharmins, they see reality" with the level of a buddha.

Next, Milarepa says,

> Compassion's force drawn forth from that is
> What the good qualities of the buddhas are—
> The strengths, fearlessnesses, retentions, and so on,
> Originating in the manner of a precious jewel.

Here he is saying that from the seeing not of consciousness but wisdom just explained, the force of great compassion arises and then, based on the capacity of that great compassion, the buddha's ten powers, and four fearlessnesses, and retentions of the various types of non-forgetfulness, and so on—the qualities altogether of the buddhas—arise. Well then, how do they arise? They arise in the manner of a precious jewel that is present on your person without your knowing it and that is obtained simply by your uncovering it.

The qualities which appear when mind's actuality, the sugatagarbha, is realized by manifesting it directly are explained in many different ways in the "qualities" and "activity" chapters of the *Great Vehicle Highest Continuum*. Committing those chapters to memory will make it much easier if you later study the text through the commentaries to it, such as the one by Jamgon Lodro Thaye called *The Lion's Roar Commentary to the Highest Continuum.*

Milarepa completes the song by saying,

> That for me the yogin is the extent of my
> realization.

With this, he is stating that this is how he has realized it, himself. He has sung his song with the assurance of having realized the actuality of mind in direct perception. Because he has those qualities, when you recite the song, recite it out aloud and Milarepa's speech will be present; recite it with a visualization of Milarepa before you and his body will be present; recite it and then, because the intention in his mind is expressed through the words being recited, his mind also will be present. If you do that, you will be doing a practice of accomplishing the guru, and so will receive the empowerments of body, speech, and mind.

3. Supporting Scripture for Other Emptiness

To explain Other Emptiness fully, it is necessary to bring quotations from many scriptures and to explain how those quotations apply. Therefore, here are quotations which are important to Other Emptiness with an explanation of each. There are quotations from the sūtras, from Maitreya and Asaṅga's *Great Vehicle Highest Continuum*, from Guardian Nāgārjuna's *In Praise of the Dharmadhātu*, from Dharmakīrti's *Complete Commentary on Pramāṇa*, and from Milarepa's songs. All of them illustrate the Other Emptiness approach which was so succinctly stated in the line "Do not see consciousness, they see wisdom" above.

The *Great Vehicle Highest Continuum Treatise* teaches the subject of tathāgatagarbha in a series of seven topics concerning the garbha. The garbha is the indestructible portion of mind, therefore it is referred to as the "vajra" and the seven topics concerning it are called "the seven topics concerning mind's vajra" or, in brief, "the seven vajra topics". The fourth vajra topic contains the teaching on luminosity sugatagarbha. That teaching is arranged in three brief reasons, ten extensive classifications, and nine metaphors that show how the stains of dualistic mind obscure it.

If the entity of the mind of us sentient beings which operates in such a topsy-turvy, mixed-up way is carefully looked at with prajñā, nothing whatsoever is found. But, if it is not examined and just left to be what it actually is, something is there—a factor of luminosity. This paradox was expressed by Milarepa with the words,

> When examined, it is not found;
> When left alone, it is luminosity;
> That is the actuality of mind.

Many meditators have had that experience. Why is luminosity present there when the mind is not examined and left self-settled? Mind's actuality or innate character or ultimate actuality is naturally-occurring, so if you leave mind alone to be just what it is, a naturally-occurring factor of luminosity will become obvious. Milarepa makes use of this paradoxical fact in his works to explain that at the time of determining the view, mind "when examined, is not found", which is connected with the Autonomy and Consequence Middle Ways of the second turning of the wheel. And he explains that at the time of meditation done to actually experience the view, mind

"when left alone, is luminosity", which is connected with the direct experience of the naturally-occurring luminosity free of stains that accords with Other Emptiness, Mahāmudrā, and Mahā Ati. Thus, he connects "view" with the self-empty approach and "meditation" with the other-empty approach and, moreover, connects the two of them into a practical approach for the development of mind.

In another song, Milarepa again sings of the two different approaches, and shows how one follows the other. In the song *Profound Definitive Meaning Sung on the Snowy Range*, he first sings of the meaning of the second turning of the wheel, which he again likens to the view. This part connects with the first line in the song above, "If examined, it is not found", and accords with the intent of the middle turning, as found in the *Heart Prajñāpāramitā*, and expressed in the Autonomy and Consequence Middle Ways:

> In mind having the view, emptiness dawns.
> Not even an atom of entity is to be seen.
> Seer and seen have been refined until gone.
> This way of realizing the view works well.

Then, following on from that, he sings of the meaning of the third and fourth turnings of the wheel which he again likens to meditation. This part connects with the second line in the song above "When left alone, it is luminosity" and accords with the intent of Other Emptiness:

> Meditation is a flow of luminosity.
> Not holding to breaks and sessions to meditate in,

Meditator and meditation have been refined until
gone.
This core of meditation works well.

In this part of the song, "luminosity" refers to "mind's actuality luminosity" spoken of in the third turning sūtras, and "the innate left to be as it is" and "rigpa left to be as it is" spoken of in Mahāmudrā and Mahā Ati.

Then the third line above, "That is the actuality of mind", is about the fruition. There is a verse about this *Great Vehicle Highest Continuum*,

That which is mind's nature, luminosity,
Like space is without change;
The adventitious stains of passion, and so on come
from comprehending what is not authentic,
Do not change it to affliction.[75]

What is the "mind's nature", that is, its entity or its ultimate actuality? It is luminosity. However, it is not that first it is not luminosity and then it turns into luminosity. Rather, it is luminosity by nature. Therefore, that which is mind's nature, luminosity, does not have change associated with it. The simile given for that is that it is like space. Now if it is unchanging, is it permanent? No, this being without change is posited to be of the type that is beyond permanence and impermanence. If you were to posit that that which is beyond permanence and impermanence were permanent, then it

[75] རྒྱུད་བླ་མ་ལས། །སེམས་ཀྱི་རང་བཞིན་འོད་གསལ་གང་ཡིན་པ། །དེ་ནི་ནམ་མཁའ་བཞིན་དུ་འགྱུར་མེད་དེ། །ཡང་དག་མིན་རྟོགས་ལས་བྱུང་འདོད་ཆགས་སོགས། །གློ་བུར་དྲི་མས་དེ་ཉོན་མོངས་མི་འགྱུར།

would fall into the view of permanence. This is without change that is beyond permanence and impermanence. Now if it is that kind of luminosity without change, is it obscured by adventitious stains? That which comes from comprehension of what is not the authentic is that which comes from outwardly-directed comprehension. What comes from it is passion and the other afflictions of delusion, anger, pride, jealousy, and so on which are adventitious stains. "Adventitious stains" refers to that which, because it causes something to be obscured, functions as a stain on that thing, but which comes then goes and is not truly a part of the thing it has temporarily obscured. If something that is functioning as a stain can be removed from the thing that it is staining, then it is an adventitious stain. These adventitious stains of passion, and so on come onto the surface of mind's actuality, the nature luminosity, but do not cause mind's actuality to change to affliction because the entity of mind's actuality has no stains in it. Another way to say this is through the idea of primordial purity: the entity of mind's actuality, sugatagarbha, is from the outset the complete purity of a buddha's mind, therefore, passion, and so on, do not and cannot change it to affliction.

In the Self Emptiness system, luminosity has to be understood as a thing and impermanent. In the Other Emptiness system, that sort of understanding is not found because being a thing and being impermanent are not required for the luminosity. The understanding of that system is that the luminosity is beyond thing and non-thing, beyond permanence and impermanence. There, luminosity sugatagarbha has an entity is untainted by stains because it is from the outset complete purity.

The situation is like the sun and clouds that obscure it. From the point of view of our eyes, which is like the self-empty point of view of the second turning of the wheel, the sun is seen as being obscured by clouds. However, from the other-empty point of view of the sun itself, there is never any obscuration in it itself, so there is no cloudiness to be removed from it. Another quotation from the *Great Vehicle Highest Continuum* takes this further:

> Like a jewel, sky, or water are pure
> There is no other in its entity.

Precious pure gold, a sky free from clouds, and water cleaned of murkiness are examples of how, while adventitious stains can occur on the Mind's actuality luminosity sugatagarbha, the entity of the luminosity itself has no stains in it. It does not have defilements of the adventitious stains in its entity in the same way that gold itself is not the dross which can come onto gold, water is not the murkiness which can come into it, and the sky itself is not the obscuring clouds which can come onto it. It is from the outset completely pure.

Why is it that the mind's actuality is not affected by the stains? The stains that occur in relation to mind's actuality are the stains of discursive thoughts and afflictions. When a dream is not recognized as such, discursive thoughts and afflictions really do seem to be there but when a dream is recognized as such, neither the objects of the discursive thoughts and afflictions in the dream nor the discursive thought and affliction itself are seen as truly existent, that is, existing by way of a self-nature. Thus, discursive thoughts and afflictions on mind's actuality are, like those of a dream, adventitious.

Thus, the way in which the adventitious stains are empty is that they are self-empty but the way in which mind's actuality luminosity sugatagarbha is empty is other-empty. To support this, there is a quotation from the *Great Vehicle Highest Continuum* which is regarded as the most important scriptural quotation for Other Emptiness:

> The element, sugatagarbha, is empty of that which
> has the characteristic of being separable, the
> adventitious stains;
> It is not empty of that which has the characteristic
> of not being separable, the unsurpassable
> dharmas.

The entity of sugatagarbha does not contain stains of the type which it is regarded as being empty of, the adventitious stains which have the characteristic of being separable from it. Well then, is it empty of the dharmas which are its qualities? No. It is not empty of the dharmas which are its qualities and which have the characteristic of being inseparable from its entity. These qualities come into being simultaneously with it. The stains are adventitious to its entity whereas its good qualities are spontaneously present.

Then, there is the text *In Praise of the Dharmadhātu* by Guardian Nāgārjuna which also is regarded as very important for the Other Emptiness tradition. In it, the following example is given:

> Just as there is a cloth cleanable by fire
> Having stains of various types
> And just as when put into fire
> The stains are consumed, not the cloth,

> Likewise for luminosity's mind
> Having stains of passion, and so on
> Wisdom's fire consumes the afflictions—
> Just that and not the luminosity.[76]

The "cloth cleanable by fire" in ancient India was said to exist in the god realms. However, there is a substance like this in our world—it is asbestos cloth. When that cloth is stained, it can have the stains removed by putting into fire but will not be harmed by doing so. Similarly, the naturally-occurring luminosity which is stained by stains of passion, and so on does have these stains consumed by the fire of wisdom but, in doing so, the wisdom burns only the afflictions and not the luminosity. When practitioners meditate on the holy dharma and do so by meditating on the lack of self of persons and the lack of self of phenomena, the prajñā which realizes lack of self cleans away the stains of those two types of grasping at a self, and at that time, the stains are consumed but the mind's actuality luminosity sugatagarbha is not consumed.

To make this easy to understand, two things have to be distinguished—the fictional mind with its dharmins and the luminosity mind with its dharmatā. When the confusion of the dharmins of fictional mind has been dispelled, the dharmatā of luminosity mind is left over. If the latter did not exist or was eliminated at the same time, then, once the fictional mind was dispelled, there were would not be any-

76 ཆོས་དབྱིངས་བསྟོད་པ་ལས། །ཇི་ལྟར་མེ་ཡིས་དག་པའི་གོས། །སྣ་ཚོགས་དྲི་མས་དྲི་མ་ཅན། །ཇི་ལྟར་མེ་ཡི་ནང་བཅུག་ན། །དྲི་མ་ཚིག་འགྱུར་གོས་མིན་ལྟར། །དེ་བཞིན་འོད་གསལ་བ་ཡི་སེམས། །འདོད་ཆགས་ལ་སོགས་དྲི་མ་ཅན། །ཡེ་ཤེས་མེ་ཡིས་ཉོན་མོངས་བསྲེག །དེ་ཉིད་འོད་གསལ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།

thing left at all; everything would be non-existence and the practitioner also would cease to exist—there would be no-one and nothing left. That the practitioner does not cease to exist is embodied in the fact that, once the fictional mind has been eliminated by its antidote, the luminosity mind does remain and that luminosity mind has the good qualities of compassion and prajñā spontaneously present in it.

Further examples used to illustrate this are that when sesame seeds are pounded, the husk is removed, but the sesame butter remains and that when gold ore is refined, the dross is removed, but the gold remains. Similarly, when the confused mind is cleaned off, the luminosity mind remains.

The meaning here is the same as what Milarepa said in *The Mahāmudrā Distinguishing Provisional and Definitive*,

> ... clears the murkiness from rigpa's water-moon.
> The sun of luminosity, free from clouds ...

The murkiness is the confused mind, the water-moon is the luminosity-mind, and the sun of luminosity is free of clouds. The luminosity is being set out as the sun and the adventitious stains are being set out as the clouds. This quote also agrees with the earlier quote from the *Great Vehicle Highest Continuum*. In the Mahā Ati tradition, when this is discussed, they say that "confused mind is dispelled" and it is understood that "beyond-mind rigpa remains". This is the same as saying that the luminosity mind remains. And in the Mahāmudrā tradition what Milarepa says in his *The Three Nails of Meditation* that, "There is the state of rigpa-luminosity", also fits with this.

The Complete Commentary on Pramāṇa by Dharmakīrti says,

> Mind's nature, luminosity:
> The stains are adventitious ...[77]

which agrees with the earlier quotations from the *Great Vehicle Highest Continuum* and with the statements found in both Mahāmudrā and Mahā Ati.

In another song, the Lord of Yogins, Milarepa, said,

> Discursiveness itself also is luminosity:
> Experience sun-and-moon like dawns
> As luminosity without ten directions or three times,
> Identificationless so without expression but with
> Certainty arising like planets and stars.[78]

His song is much longer than that but these words are special. When he says that discursiveness also is luminosity, he is using luminosity in the sense of mind's actuality luminosity. Is discursive thoughts' actuality that luminosity? Yes, because discursive thought's very essence is the same entity as that of luminosity. That being so, how will it be experienced? It will dawn, he says using the simile of sun and moon. When will it be known, when will it be clear? It will be known outside of time and direction because if time or direction were present, since they are composite phenomena, the knowing would be dualistic knowing. It is, outside direction and time, the

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77 ཚད་མ་རྣམ་འགྲེལ་ལས། །སེམས་ཀྱི་རང་བཞིན་འོད་གསལ་ཏེ། །དྲི་མ་རྣམས་ནི་གློ་བུར་བ།

78 རྣལ་འབྱོར་གྱི་དབང་ཕྱུག་མི་ལ་རས་པས། །རྟོག་པ་རང་ཡང་འོད་གསལ་ཏེ། །ཉམས་སྨྱོང་ཉི་ཟླ་ལྟར་བུར་ཤར། །ཕྱོགས་བཅུ་དུས་གསུམ་མེད་པར་གསལ། །ངོས་བཟུང་མེད་པས་བརྗོད་བྲལ་དང་། །ངེས་ཤེས་གཟའ་སྐར་ལྟ་བུར་ཤར།

nature luminosity. Is that luminosity identified? Identification is a process belonging only to dualistic mind. It is the process that uses concepts to identify this and that item of consciousness and pigeon hole it so that it can be dealt with in the general perceptual process. Therefore, no, there is no process of identification, which shows that the essence of the luminosity is empty. Because there is no identification involved, it is the ultimate which is expressionless. This line teaches luminosity and shows that it is free of elaborations and so inexpressible. However, he continues, even though that luminosity is inexpressible because of being free from elaboration, when experienced, it is experienced with certainty. "With certainty arising like planets and stars" means that for yogins who realize mind's actuality, mahāmudrā, certainty of various sorts dawns, just as various types of planets and stars appear in space. It is not that there is no certainty once discursive thoughts have been eliminated, to the contrary, there is the deep certainty connected with wisdom.

Finally, here is a quotation from the sūtras:

> Mind: mind not existing is mind's nature
> luminosity ...[79]

Here, when it first says mind, it means mind generally. Next, when it says "mind not existing" it means when samsaric mind is not existing by way of an entity, which is stated in accordance with the middle turning. Finally, when it mentions

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[79] སེམས་ནི་སེམས་མ་མཆིས་ཏེ་སེམས་ཀྱི་རང་བཞིན་འོད་གསལ་བའོ།

luminosity, it is stated in accordance with the sugatagarbha mentioned in the third turning sūtras.

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One of the most important scriptural quotations used by the Other Emptiness system to support its view comes from the *Great Vehicle Highest Continuum Treatise*. It says:

> The element is empty of that with the characteristic
> of separability, the adventitious stains,
> It is not empty of that with the characteristic of
> non-separability, the unsurpassable dharmas ...

These two lines define the meaning of being empty of other. Restated, they mean that mind's actuality luminosity sugatagarbha is empty of that which has the characteristic of being separable from it, the adventitious stains of samsaric mind, but is not empty of that which is characterized as inseparable from it, the unsurpassable dharmas, that is, the superfactual dharmakāya's qualities.

The unsurpassable dharmas come into being in a process called spontaneous existence. If they did not, they would arise from causes and that would mean that they were compounded. If they were compounded, they would be worldly compounded phenomena and would disintegrate. If that were so, the superfactual dharmakāya possessing them, or you could say nirvāṇa, would become a place that was not trustworthy, and these presentations of the Middle Way would not be trustworthy as a means to emancipation.

Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye presents the view of Other Emptiness in his *Treasury of Knowledge* with this and other verses. He says the same as the previous quotation and adds a further point:

> Empty of the adventitious to be cleaned,
> Not empty of the unsurpassable dharmas,
> The realization of self-arising rigpa means
> That it is constructed-luminosity luminosity-less.

The first line says that mind's actuality, which is luminosity sugatagarbha, is empty of the stains that arise adventitiously on its surface. What are those stains? They are the passing experiences of ignorance, the afflictions that come from it, the karma that comes from the afflictions, and the various sufferings that later arise due to those three. Those three, which sum up the occurrences which appear adventitiously on the surface of mind's actuality, temporarily defile or stain it. The sugatagarbha is empty of the adventitious stains to be cleaned because they do not introduce a taint to it because, being empty of a self-nature they could affect it at all.

The second line says that mind's actuality, sugatagarbha, is not empty of the unsurpassable dharmas. There are fictional good qualities and superfactual good qualities. Buddha is not empty of the unsurpassable dharmas which are the good qualities of the superfactual dharmakāya because these good qualities are spontaneously present. They are not there as a cleanliness that would come from cleaning off adventitious stains but are there spontaneously in its entity.

The third line states how mind's actuality, sugatagarbha, is to be realized. There is no cleaning to be done that would result

in luminosity; if there were, the resulting luminosity would be a freshly created or a "constructed" luminosity. Because there is no new luminosity to be created, the actual realization, a realization which is obtained simply through accessing one's innate self-arising rigpa, is luminosity that is without a luminosity of the constructed type. In other words, mind's actuality does not have to be newly constructed.

Then, Milarepa says in the fruition verse of *The Three Nails of Meditation*:

> To explain fruition's Three Nails:
> Nirvāṇa has nothing to be produced from another,
> Saṃsāra has nothing to be abandoned to another
> I am decided that my own mind is buddha.

This is a very high way of talking which agrees with the view of the *Great Vehicle Highest Continuum*. The second line shows that mind's actuality is natural nirvāṇa. Natural nirvāṇa does not need to be produced from anything else because there is nothing to produce—anything that has to be produced from some other thing is not a final attainment. The third line says that saṃsāra is dream-like confused appearances, not the actuality of mind, and since those confused appearances have no entity to them, there nothing whatsoever to abandoned. The fourth line is saying that one's own mind's actuality, inseparable luminosity-emptiness, is the superfactual buddha, the superfactual dharmakāya. "I am decided" on that, means that Milarepa has arrived at this without any doubt of it.

Then Dzogchen Patrul Rinpoche said in his *Crying to the Guru from Afar*:

> Pure expanse sugatagarbha is ground dharmakāya;
> Purifier the path obtains the equipoise dharmakāya;
> Purified like that it becomes the two purity
> possessing, ultimate dharmakāya;
> Guru who is inseparable with these three mind-
> streams, please think of me.

What is the ground dharmakāya mentioned there? It is the pure expanse, the sugatagarbha pure of stains, the ground dharmakāya, the ground buddha. Because of saying, "This mind's actuality is the ground dharmakāya", the statement comes that "Every sentient being is buddha itself". There is a lot to explain about this assertion that sentient beings are buddha. Kagyu and Nyingma traditions commonly explain this point with a quote from the *Hevajra Tantra*'s two parts which says,

> Sentient beings are buddha itself
> But are obscured by adventitious stains.

In the second line, the equipoise that realizes mind's actuality luminosity sugatagarbha in direct perception is the path dharmakāya. In the third line, prajñā arising from the equipoise of meditation having cleansed the stains on the wisdom, the resulting fruition is the dharmakāya having the two purities. The verse ends by supplicating the guru who, through great kindness shows the ground, path, and fruition dharmakāya, which in this Other Emptiness teaching is usually referred to as the ground, path, and fruition sugatagarbha.

Mind's actuality sugatagarbha has the nature of indestructibility, permanence, and non-change. The supporting scripture for this is found in *Great Vehicle Highest Continuum*. Explanations of it point out that permanence here means the great permanence "beyond permanence and impermanence", not permanence in the normal sense, and therefore that this positing of permanence does not impose true existence on mind's actuality. Mind's actuality sugatagarbha is beyond both permanent and impermanent, but it needs a convention to describe it, which is why it is called "permanent".

4. Practice of the Two Views

Next, the view which has been carefully explained so far has to be put into practice. Here is an explanation of the path travelled by yogins who, step by step, develop the corresponding experiences then realizations of the view.

Yogins first, as in the Autonomy Middle Way view, meditate again and again on the equipoise in which consciousness is empty like the sky. Then, the thought, "It is empty", which is grasping at emptiness, collapses and they stay equipoised in the state of freedom from elaboration. To this point, the thing to be meditated on, the dharmatā, has been an elaboration and the thing doing the meditation, rational mind[80], likewise. Now, the meditation and meditator have been merged so there is equipoise in a state without reference point, without grasping, without elaboration.

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[80] For rational mind, see the glossary.

By staying in that equipoise again and again in the state where reference points and elaborations have collapsed, there finally comes a time of realizing the dharmatā, mind's actuality, in direct perception, free of a bare emptiness. Bare emptiness is one of several terms that indicate an emptiness which is conceptually produced. It is a slightly pejorative term referring to an emptiness that is only emptiness and does not have appearance in it. Beyond the boundary point within which there are elaborations, mind's actuality, its natural luminosity without stains in its entity, free of conventions of names and words, unhindered utterly pure luminosity, a personally experienced space of emptiness beyond realizer and realizer, is realized![81]

[81] With the words in this paragraph, Khenpo Tsultrim gave the introduction to the Other Emptiness view. Unfortunately, the translator of the time did not understand the words or the meaning so, mis-translating and not conveying the importance of it, the audience did not get it. They were told by the translator that there was a shimmering, clear light in the mind and other such words that completely detracted from the meaning. Furthermore, the words are very special but in themselves, read off the page, do not convey the meaning. This part here is especially noteworthy because the khenpo did not stop merely at the logical description of the path of Other Emptiness but actually gave all the oral instruction required for its practice in the form of an introduction to that nature of mind. Unfortunately, you cannot read the words in this paragraph and attempt to practise it; it cannot work.

That, the actual practice of the path to the attainment of realization, is also described in Milarepa's song, *The Three Nails of Meditation*:

> To explain the three nails of meditation:
> There is discursive thought liberated into
> dharmakāya;
> There is the state of rigpa-luminosity bliss;
> There is equipoise without contrivance.

"There is discursive thought liberated as dharmakāya" is the first nail. If discursive thought's actuality, which is the same as saying mind's actuality, is said to be luminosity and emptiness inseparable then, when discursive thought's actuality is realized, discursive thought self-liberates into dharmakāya, where dharmakāya is the word used to indicate fruition level luminosity-emptiness. When that happens, what is this actuality of discursive thought, this dharmakāya, like? There is rigpa-luminosity which is bliss. There is a state of rigpa knowing its own face without something doing the knowing and something known; there is the nature luminosity without something being luminous and something being illuminated by it. When there is that kind of naturally-occurring realization, there is also natural cheer, natural bliss, so the second nail of meditation is that "there is the state of rigpa-luminosity bliss" meaning there is the state of rigpa-luminosity and bliss inseparable. How should one stay in that state? "There is equipoise without contrivance", he says, meaning that to stay in meditation is to do so while not making any contrivance of the state—no alteration or adjustment of it. In that way, he clearly states the way of realizing the actuality of mind. In terms of realizing the actuality of mind, the

Mahāmudrā system also uses the term "ordinary mind"[82] and speaks of "ordinary mind introducing itself to itself" and speaks of "wisdom, the dharmatā of mind, beyond conventions, introducing itself to itself". "Ordinary mind introducing itself", "wisdom introducing itself", and "rigpa introducing itself all have the same meaning"; they are terms of the same meaning used in different contexts.[83]

Furthermore, to connect "Do not see consciousness, they see wisdom" with the Mahā Ati system, that statement and the statement made in Mahā Ati that "rigpa, which is beyond mind, recognizing itself" have the same meaning. The

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[82] Tib. tha mal gyi shes pa.

[83] This explanation in this paragraph was given mainly using the words of the Mahāmudrā practice instructions. This is fitting. In the Kagyu lineage, in general, first one learns the view according to the second then third turning of the wheel of the sūtras. He explained the whole view section in that way. For the actual practice of the path, Kagyus will shift to the practice of the tantras, including Mahāmudrā. Therefore, in this section on the path of practice, he started with sūtra but quickly moved to the introduction to the nature of mind that goes with tantra and is now explaining the meditation according to Mahāmudrā. There is no fault in this because the view of Other Emptiness applies to both sūtra and tantra. However, there is some difference in the terminology used when presenting Other Emptiness according to the third turning of the wheel of sūtra and the tantras. For example, here he has been talking about "rigpa", translated as "knowing", in conjunction with luminosity and also great bliss—these are the words of Mahāmudrā, not the sūtras. In the next paragraph he will move on to saying the same thing but this time from the Mahā Ati perspective.

"consciousness" mentioned in Milarepa's line is the same as "the mind" mentioned in the line just given here and the wisdom mentioned in Milarepa's line is the same as the "rigpa recognizing itself" mentioned in the line just given here.

The meaning we are now discussing of what is realized in actual practice was expressed by a lord amongst yogins, Milarepa, in his *The Mahāmudrā Distinguishing Provisional and Definitive*. In that, when he says,

> ... clears the murkiness from rigpa's water-moon.
> The sun of luminosity, free from clouds ...

the term "murkiness" refers to mind and "rigpa" to beyond-mind, self-arising rigpa wisdom. When that rigpa has been manifested in the style of the superfactual introducing itself to itself, which is the actual practice that we have been discussing just now, then the murkiness of discursive thoughts, the confused mind, has been liberated in its own place.

Tilopa, another consummate practitioner said,

> Kye Ho! This self-knowing wisdom is
> Beyond verbalization, not the domain of
> mentation ...

The self-knowing wisdom that he just mentioned is the same thing that we have been talking about; luminosity-emptiness directly realized, beyond-mind rigpa introducing itself to itself; and so on.

A SONG OF MILAREPA: "ULTIMATE VIEW, MEDITATION, CONDUCT, AND FRUITION"

The view is emptiness's wisdom;
The meditation is luminosity without grasping;
The conduct is a continuity of no-clinging;
The fruition is naked stainlessness.

The view, empty's wisdom,
Has the danger of slipping into mouthed view only:
When certainty regarding it is not aroused,
Words provide no liberation from self-grasping,
Therefore cherish strong certainty!

The meditation, luminosity without grasping,
Has the danger of slipping into abiding only:
When wisdom does not dawn from within,
There is stable abiding but no factor of liberation;
In agitation and sinking wisdom is not born,
Therefore cherish mindfulness of non-distraction!

The conduct, a continuity of no-clinging,
Has the danger of slipping into only inappropriate conduct:

When view and meditation do not dawn as assistants,
It is renowned as ascetic practice, the conduct of the eight dharmas,
Therefore cherish no-clinging, no-obscuration!

The fruition, naked stainlessness,
Has the danger of being dressed in the clothes of concept tokens:
When confusion does not collapse from within,
Mental aspirations are cultivated but with little meaning,
Therefore cherish the collapse of confusion!

Having sung that, certainty was aroused in the whole assembly, all of whom were very glad and full of rejoicing.

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF OTHER EMPTINESS UNDERSTOOD THROUGH MILAREPA'S SONG "ULTIMATE VIEW, MEDITATION, CONDUCT, AND FRUITION"

There is song of Milarepa called *Ultimate View, Meditation, Conduct, and Fruition* that shows Other Emptiness from the practice perspective. The first four lines of his song set a basis that he then comments on in the remainder of the song.

> The view is emptiness's wisdom;
> The meditation is luminosity without grasping;
> The conduct is a continuity of no-clinging;
> The fruition is naked stainlessness.

We will look at the first four lines one by one and then at the verses commenting on them, one by one. He says,

> The view is emptiness's wisdom ...

What is the view? It is emptiness's wisdom, empty-of-stains wisdom, empty-of-elaborations wisdom. He says that the ultimate view is not just emptiness alone, not just emptiness of the two self-graspings alone, not just non-affirming empti-

ness alone, not just the collapse of elaboration but is emptiness's wisdom.

He says,

> The meditation is luminosity without grasping …

If the view is empty wisdom, what is the style of the meditation? Meditation is to stay in the internal luminosity, without grasping, in a letting it be as it is way, he says.

These first two lines come to the same meaning because the empty wisdom which is the ultimate view expressed in the first line is the same as staying continuously, without grasping, in the luminosity expressed in the second line. The direct experience belonging to the statements "it is luminosity", "it is empty of elaborations", "it is empty of stains" comes to the same as being without grasping. He says in the second line that for meditation is necessary to stay in the state free of grasping at emptiness and grasping at luminosity, using the approach of being settling into what is left to be itself. It is necessary to stay in meditation within luminosity but without grasping at it via the thought, "This is luminosity". To grasp at it with that sort of thought is to stay in the obscuration of grasping. If grasping comes, there will be the fetter of grasping in the meditation.

He says,

> The conduct is a continuity of no desire …

Now, for the conduct. Here, "no desire" means to be without clinging. Having freed oneself from grasping by having developed the profound view of empty wisdom and done the

meditation of luminosity without grasping, a continuity of non-clinging arises.

In the system of the Vehicle of Characteristics[84], it is necessary to posit the two different contexts of equipoise and post-attainment. These correspond to the meditation of staying equipoised one-pointedly in the ultimate and the conduct of post-attainment. In this system, buddhahood is defined as the time when the practitioner arrives at the point of there being no separation between equipoise and post-attainment. In Mahāmudrā and Mahā Ati, no separation is made between equipoise and post-meditation. In those systems, it is possible to remain equipoised in the dharmatā while being in the conduct of post-meditation and vice versa. That is one of the special teachings of the Mahāmudrā and Mahā Ati systems.

He says,

> The fruition is naked stainlessness ...

Now for the fruition of that view, meditation, and conduct. It is naked stainlessness. The "view of empty wisdom" was said to mean that the wisdom has no stains, no elaborations in its entity. The actuality of mind, luminosity, or "the view, empty wisdom" does not have any no stains in its own entity though for ordinary people it does have adventitious stains obscuring it. What are the adventitious stains? They are the stains of discursive thought belonging to the confused state of saṃsāra which have the characteristic of obscuring the actuality of mind. When the actuality of mind is totally freed of the

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[84] For Vehicle of Characteristics, see the glossary.

stains obscuring it, its primordially stainless quality becomes nakedly apparent and that, he said, is the fruition.

Now for the view, he says:

> The view, empty's wisdom,
> Has the danger of slipping into mouthed view only:
> When certainty regarding it is not aroused,
> Words provide no liberation from self-grasping,
> Therefore cherish strong certainty!

With these words he is saying that he has seen himself how people could mouth off about the view, empty's wisdom, saying that, from the outset, it has no stains in its essence, is complete purity, buddha, alpha-purity[85], primordial purity, is beyond every elaboration of the mass of conventions concerning existence and non-existence, is empty of elaborations of conventions, and so on, but not doing anything useful about it. These are various ways of describing empty wisdom in the many schools of sūtra and tantra; Milarepa has seen how it is possible for people to know enough to talk about it in every which way but not to get on with developing certainty about it that is borne of experience.

"Emptiness's wisdom" and "freedom-from-elaborations wisdom" and "ordinary mind" and "rigpa" are some of the many different words found in sūtra and tantra traditions that have the same meaning. For all of them there is this danger of slipping into only mouthing off about them. If you have just a verbal view only and not actual wisdom, then liberation

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[85] Alpha purity is the special name for primordial purity used in the Mahā Ati system.

will not be possible and you will not be able to meet the view. We have all of these names but what is the actual basis which that name is being applied to? You have to arouse certainty in that!

Even with hundreds of words you cannot liberate yourself whatsoever from self-grasping because words cannot be an antidote to self-grasping. Many people learn to recite the *Heart Prajñāpāramitā* by heart from a young age and by the time that they are older they have recited the words so many time yet still have not contacted the real meaning! This is the sort of thing that Milarepa is talking about and there are many other scriptures that have words to the same effect, such as the *Reciting the Names of Mañjuśhrī Tantra.* Therefore, cherish the certainty that is borne from experience!

Now for the meditation, he says:

> The meditation, luminosity without grasping,
> Has the danger of slipping into abiding only:
> When wisdom does not dawn from within that,
> There is stable abiding but no factor of liberation;
> In agitation and sinking wisdom is not born,
> Therefore cherish mindfulness of non-distraction!

Arouse certainty in luminosity and then settle yourself into just what that is. There are many descriptions of the way to put yourself into it: putting yourself into just what it is; putting yourself there uncontrived; staying there loosely; and so on. Even then, there is the danger of slipping into mere abiding, he says, meaning that the danger here is of settling into what is merely śhamatha without vipaśhyanā joined to it. In Mahāmudrā meditation, even though you stay in non dual

emptiness, if you only abide there in a settled way, that is śhamatha. In Other Emptiness, even though you stay in freedom from elaboration, if you merely abide, it is śhamatha. Even though you stay in luminosity, if you merely abide, it is śhamatha. The problem in short is that there is the danger of slipping into abiding only, meaning śhamatha alone.

What if you do slip into abiding only? There is śhamatha within that but there is no vipaśhyanā. Wisdom has to dawn, but when you are only abiding that does not happen, because the wisdom by definition has vipaśhyanā. Many highly accomplished beings have spoken of this point. For example, Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye in one of his works on Mahāmudrā said,

> From within the state beyond rational mind,
> wisdom dawns ...

meaning that wisdom has to shine forth from abiding in the state beyond rational mind.

Now all of those statements come from systems that believe that wisdom exists within the ground of being. Other Emptiness is one of those systems, the Self-Emptiness system is not.

How can wisdom be made to shine forth from that ground? It will happen when the vipaśhyanā within the luminosity knows its own face. It will not happen when there is stable abiding but none of the insightful knowing that is the factor of liberation. One of Milarepa's disciples developed a very good śhamatha and was able to stay in an abiding that lasted for seven days without appearances arising even for one instant. For him, it happened in a moment, but what actually

happened was that he lost seven days of his life. Being able to stay in an abiding for a long time is not such a grand achievement. There is talk of meditators who spend many aeons in one session of concentration; in one place it mentions one practitioner's concentration lasting for eighty thousand aeons. All in all, a practitioner who does not have the factor of liberation can easily be trapped by abiding.

When there is no factor of liberation, agitation and dullness can occur within the abiding. What are agitation and dullness? These are difficult to identify, as Sakya Paṇḍita, Tsongkhapa, and Dreu Lhaypa who was a very learned guru of the Drukpa Kagyu tradition, have all said. Tsongkhapa said to a Kagyu meditator who had practised for twenty years that he didn't want to enter into a discussion to identify agitation and sinking, it was too difficult. Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye clarified a statement in his exposition of Mahā Ati called *Lam Rim Yeshe Nyingpo* by saying that,

> Rigpa without radiance is agitation;
> Not apprehending the experience aspect of luminosity is sinking.

Also, Padma Karpo says in one of his Mahāmudrā texts,

> Agitation and sinking do not rise from wisdom.
> Dullness is the external space.

If a concentration has agitation and dullness, then wisdom will not arise. For that reason, meditators need to have mindfulness of non-distraction. Now there are three different kinds of mindfulness explained: composite mindfulness, effortless mindfulness, and spontaneously-present mindfulness. The beginning meditator relies on composite mindful-

ness[86]. If good realization arises, the effortless type will be used[87]. When very high realization happens and the actuality is realized, the spontaneously-present mindfulness appears. Spontaneously-present mindfulness does not happen until the actuality of mind is realized, so beginners rely on the composite mindfulness.

Altogether, the mindfulness of non-distraction is important because if it is not present, agitation and dullness occur and then wisdom does not shine forth. Just as light does not come from within darkness itself, likewise wisdom does not shine forth from within agitation and dullness.

Now for the conduct:

> The conduct, a continuity of non-clinging,
> Has the danger of slipping into only inappropriate
> conduct:
> When view and meditation do not dawn as
> assistants,
> It is renowned as ascetic practice, the conduct of the
> eight dharmas,
> Therefore cherish non-clinging, non-obscuration!

Conduct in this context means that there is no desire, no clinging. It is like recognizing a dream. When you are

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[86] Composite mindfulness is mindfulness functioning within ordinary, dualistic mind.

[87] Effortless mindfulness is mindfulness which operates without conceived-of efforts. It is similar to the spontaneously-present mindfulness. The difference is that it is not a final realization where the other is.

involved in this conduct which is like recognizing a dream, if you are active without being distracted whatsoever from the recognition of the dream, then there is, due to the non-distraction, no clinging to truth. The principal thing is that, due to staying settled just as it is in the state of luminosity, there is conduct which is an uninterrupted flow of not clinging to anything whatsoever. In other words, this sort of conduct requires that you have put yourself into the state of mind's actuality, luminosity, left just as it is and that all activity—eating sleeping, going, whatever—is then performed in an uninterrupted continuity of non-clinging.

The conduct of a continuity of non-clinging has the danger of slipping into inappropriate conduct. There is that problem with it. "Inappropriate conduct" means to perform the various special conducts of the secret mantrayāna without profound view and meditation. If the key points of view and meditation are effected by the practitioner, inappropriate conduct will not happen, but if not, there is a significant danger of it happening. The behaviour of Drukpa Kunlek and other accomplished beings which was quite wild at times was not inappropriate because they did have the profound points of view and meditation. It seems to me that what is needed not to slip into inappropriate conduct is to have conduct like that of recognizing a dream.

Profound view and profound meditation need to be present as assistants; they need to assist each other. Generally, the conduct of a śhrāvaka is the restrained conduct of someone who does not harm others, the conduct of a bodhisatva is the conduct of benefiting others, and the conduct of a practitioner of secret mantra is the ascetic conduct that is based in the

realization of Mahāmudrā. When the secret mantrayāna conduct is without the assistance of view and conduct, Milarepa refers to it as the well-known ascetic practice driven by the eight worldly dharmas. The conduct of shrāvakas is in accordance with vowed discipline so there is something there which prevents this kind of impure conduct. The conduct of a bodhisatva, if engaged without compassion, could be inappropriate and become impure conduct.

For those reasons, you should have no clinging whatsoever, so Milarepa says,

> Therefore cherish non-clinging, non-obscuration!

"Non-obscuration" here means being without the obscurations of concepts that cling to truth. In conduct, the thought that thinks, "This conduct of mine is very sacred and special", when your conduct is actually inappropriate conduct, is the obscuration of discursive thought clinging at truth.

So how should conduct be performed? If wisdom comes for you and on the basis of profound view and profound meditation your conduct is like recognizing a dream, then inappropriate types of conduct will not happen. If you recognize everything as dream-like, then no matter how you dance the dream, inappropriate conduct will not happen.

Now for the fruition:

> The fruition, naked stainlessness,
> Has the danger of being dressed in the clothes of
> concept tokens[88]:
> When confusion does not fall apart from within,
> Mental aspirations are cultivated but with little
> meaning,
> Therefore cherish the collapse of confusion!

The fruition is naked stainlessness, meaning luminosity liberated from all obscuring factors, or emptiness's wisdom with the adventitious obscuring factors removed, or rigpa become naked which is also spoken of in some places as rigpa become the enjoyment of wisdom.

There is a danger, which is that that fruition of naked stainlessness could be dressed in the clothes of concept tokens, which are the conceptual structures that drive the process of dualistic perception. Luminosity's essence has no stains, wisdom has no stains, beyond-mind rigpa has no stains, but if that sort of thing is clung at through concept tokens, in other words, if it is clung at as true, then it becomes dressed in the clothes of concept tokens.

Confusion does not have to collapse through the agency of mind but from within.

> When confusion does not collapse from within,
> Mental aspirations are cultivated but with little
> meaning ...

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[88] For concept tokens, see the glossary.

To say that confusion—samsaric mind—has to collapse does not mean that sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches are to collapse. It means that the confusion involved in clinging to truth in the interdependently originating appearances of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches has to collapse from within.

When confusion has not collapsed, all the dharma practice you might do remains only at the level of thinking and truth remains unknown. "Cultivating mental aspirations" here means that you are thinking thoughts like, "the view is emptiness's wisdom" and "from the outset I am buddha" and "from the outset I am complete purity" and "from the outset I am Samantabhadra", and so on. It is a thoroughly conceptual approach which does not help at all! No matter how much you think like that, when bad circumstances do come along, you will fall into the thickness of affliction and suffering, so it really does not help! When you are happy, reciting and thinking like that, everything seems to be all right, but when you are actually suffering, it is of no assistance at all, because suffering itself cannot be an antidote to ignorance, confusion, afflictions, etc. Therefore, confusion needs to collapse from within. If it does, then afflictions also collapse, suffering also collapses, and in fact, no matter how many clothes of concept tokens your emptiness's wisdom might have, it will also happen that all of them will collapse.

Having sung that, certainty was aroused in the whole assembly, all of whom were very glad and full of rejoicing.

Rechungpa was at the head of this assembly. After Milarepa had sung the song, all of the assembly experienced certainty and were very glad and full of rejoicing.

There are many other songs in Milarepa's works like this one that accord with the Other Emptiness system. Please look at them.

GLOSSARY

Appearance and becoming, Tib. snang srid: This is a stock phrase meaning all of saṃsāra (or sometimes all of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa). Appearance refers to the worlds and becoming refers to the sentient beings in those worlds whose existence is called "becoming". It is equivalent to another stock phrase "containers and contents" and the two are sometimes put together.

Actuality, Tib. gnas lugs: A key term in both sūtra and tantra and one of a pair of terms, the other being apparent reality (Tib. snang lugs). The two terms are used when determining the reality of a situation. The actuality of any given situation is how (lugs) the situation actuality sits or is present (gnas); the apparent reality is how any given situation appears to an observer. Something could appear in many different ways, depending on the circumstances at the time and on the being perceiving it but, regardless of those circumstances, it will always have its own actuality, how it really is. The term actuality is frequently used in view teachings to mean the fundamental reality of any given phenomenon or situation before any deluded mind alters it and makes it appear differently.

Adventitious, Tib. glo bur: This term has the connotations of popping up on the surface of something and of not being part of that thing. Therefore, even though it is often translated as

"sudden", that only conveys half of the meaning. In Buddhist literature, something adventitious comes up as a surface event and disappears again precisely because it is not actually part of the thing on whose surface it appeared. It is frequently used in relation to the afflictions because they pop up on the surface of the mind of buddha nature but are not part of the buddha nature itself, which is one of the key points of Other Emptiness theory.

Affliction, Skt. kleśha, Tib. nyon mongs: This term is usually translated as emotion or disturbing emotion, etcetera but Buddha was very specific about the meaning of this word. When the Buddha referred to the emotions, meaning a movement of mind, he did not refer to them as such but called them "kleśha" in Sanskrit, meaning exactly "affliction". It is a basic part of the Buddhist teaching that emotions afflict beings, giving them problems at the time and causing more problems in the future.

Alaya, Tib. kun gzhi: This term, if translated, is usually translated as all-base or thereabouts. It is a Sanskrit term that means a range that underlies and forms a basis for something else. In Buddhist teaching, it means a particular level of mind that sits beneath all other levels of mind. However, it is used in several different ways in the Buddhist teaching and changes to a different meaning in case.

Awareness, Skt. jñā, Tib. shes pa: "Awareness" is always used in our translations to mean the basic knower of mind or, as Buddhist teaching itself defines it, "a general term for any registering mind", whether dualistic or non-dualistic. Hence, it is used for both samsaric and nirvanic situations; for example, consciousness (Tib. rnam par shes pa) is a dualistic form of awareness, whereas rigpa, wisdom (Tib. ye shes), and so on are non-dualistic forms of awareness.

Becoming, Skt. bhāvana, Tib. srid pa: Becoming refers to the style of existence that sentient beings have within saṃsāra. Beings in saṃsāra have a samsaric existence but, more than that, they are constantly in a state of becoming. They are constantly becoming this type of being or that type of being in this abode or that, as they are driven along without choice by the karmic process that drives samsaric existence.

Bliss, Skt. sukha, Tib. bde: The Sanskrit term and its Tibetan translation are usually translated as "bliss" but in fact refer to the whole range of possibilities of everything on the side of good as opposed to bad. Thus, the term will mean pleasant, happy, good, nice, easy, comfortable, blissful, and so on, depending on context.

Bodhisatva, Tib. byang chub sems dpa': A bodhisatva is a person who has engendered the bodhichitta, enlightenment mind, and, with that as a basis, has undertaken the path to the enlightenment of a truly complete buddha specifically for the welfare of other beings. Note that, despite the common appearance of "bodhisattva" in Western books on Buddhism, the Tibetan tradition has steadfastly maintained since the time of the earliest translations that the correct spelling is bodhisatva; ; see under "satva and sattva".

Capable One, Skt. muni, Tib. thub pa: The term "muni" as for example in "Shakyamuni" has long been thought to mean "sage" because of an entry in Monier-Williams excellent Sanskrit-English dictionary. In fact, it has been used by many Indian religions since the times of ancient India to mean in general, a religious practitioner "one who could do it", one who has made progress on a spiritual path and thereby become able to restrain his three doors away from non-virtue and affliction.

Clinging, Tib. zhen pa: In Buddhism, this term refers specifically to the twofold process of dualistic mind mis-taking things

that are not true, not pure, as true, pure, etcetera and then, because of seeing them as highly desirable even though they are not, attaching itself to or clinging to those things. This type of clinging acts as a kind of glue that keeps you with the unsatisfactory things of cyclic existence because of mistakenly seeing them as desirable.

Complete purity, rnam dag: This term refers to the quality of a buddha's mind, which is completely pure compared to a sentient being's mind. The mind of a being in samsara has its primordially pure nature covered over by the muck of dualistic mind. If the being practises correctly, the impurity can be removed and mind can be returned to its original state of complete purity.

Concept tokens, Tib. mtshan ma: This is the technical name for the structures or concepts which function as the words of conceptual mind's language. They are the very basis of operation of the third skandha and hence of the way that dualistic mind communicates with its world. For example, a table seen in direct visual perception will have no concept tokens involved with knowing it. However, when thought becomes involved and there is the thought "table" in an inferential or conceptual perception of the table, the name-tag "table" will be used to reference the table and that name tag is the concept token.

Although we usually reference phenomena via these concepts, the phenomena are not the dualistically referenced things we think of them as being. The actual fact of the phenomena is quite different from the concept tokens used to discursively think about them and is known by wisdom rather than concept-based mind. Therefore, this term is often used in Buddhist literature to signify that dualistic samsaric mind is involved rather than non-dualistic wisdom.

Confusion, Tib. 'khrul pa: In Buddhism, this term mostly refers to the fundamental confusion of taking things the wrong way that happens because of fundamental ignorance though it can also have the more general meaning of having lots of thoughts and being confused about it. In the first case, it is defined like this, "Confusion is the appearance to rational mind of something being present when it is not", and refers for example to seeing an object, such as a table, as being truly present when in fact it is present only as mere, interdependent appearance.

Contrivance, contrived, Tib. bcos pa: A term meaning that something has been altered from its native state.

Cyclic existence: See under saṃsāra.

Dharmakaya, Skt. dharmakāya, Tib. chos sku: In general, this refers to the mind of a buddha, with dharma meaning reality and kāya meaning body. However, the term has special significance in the practice of Great Completion where it is the means by which one rapidly imposes liberation on oneself.

Dharmata, Skt. dharmatā, Tib. chos nyid: This is a general term meaning the way that something is, and can be applied to anything at all; it is similar in meaning to "actuality" *q.v.* For example, the dharmatā of water is wetness and the dharmatā of the becoming bardo is a place where beings are in a samsaric, or becoming mode, prior to entering a nature bardo. It is used frequently in Tibetan Buddhism to mean "the dharmatā of reality" but that is a specific case of the much larger meaning of the term. To read texts which use this term successfully, one has to understand that the term has a general meaning and then see how that applies in context.

Dharmin, Tib. chos can: Generally speaking a dharmin is a conceived-of phenomenon, so by implication belongs to the

world of saṃsāra. It is not only a phenomenon in general, a dharma, but has become a conceptualized phenomenon because of the samsaric context. Padma Karpo defines it as "awareness possessing a phenomenon" which puts the emphasis on the samsaric awareness knowing the phenomenon.

Discursive thought, Skt. vikalpita, Tib. rnam rtog: This means more than just the superficial thought that is heard as a voice in the head. It includes the entirety of conceptual process that arises due to mind contacting any object of any of the senses. The Sanskrit and Tibetan literally mean "(dualistic) thought (that arises from the mind wandering among the) various (superficies perceived in the doors of the senses)".

Doha, Skt. dohā, Tib. mgur; A dohā is a song sung spontaneously from spiritual realization. Dohās are popular in the tantric traditions because they are enjoyable to listen to and go right to the heart of the matter.

Elaboration, Tib. spro ba: This is a general name for what is given off by dualistic mind as it goes about its conceptual process. In general, elaborations prevent a person from seeing emptiness directly. Freedom from elaborations implies direct sight of emptiness.

Enlightenment mind, Skt. bodhicitta, Tib. byang chub sems: A key term of the Great Vehicle. It is the type of mind that is connected not with the lesser enlightenment of an arhat but the enlightenment of a truly complete buddha. As such, it is a mind that is connected with the aim of bringing all sentient beings to that same level of buddhahood. A person who has this mind has entered the Great Vehicle and is either a bodhisatva or a buddha.

It is important to understand that the term is used to refer equally to the minds of all levels of bodhisatva on the path to buddhahood and to the mind of a buddha who has completed the path. Therefore it is not "mind striving for enlighten-

ment" as is so often translated but "enlightenment mind", that kind of mind which is connected with the full enlightenment of a truly complete buddha and which is present in all those who belong to the Great Vehicle. The term is used in the conventional Great Vehicle and also in the Vajra Vehicle. In the Vajra Vehicle, there are some special uses of the term where substances of the pure aspect of the subtle physical body are understood to be manifestations of enlightenment mind.

Entity, Tib. ngo bo: The entity of something is just exactly what that thing is. In English we would often simply say "thing" rather than entity but there is the problem that, in Buddhism, "thing" has a very specific meaning and not the general meaning that it has in English.

Equipoise and post-attainment, Tib. mnyam bzhag and rjes thob: Although often called "meditation and post-meditation", the actual term is "equipoise and post-attainment". There is great meaning in the actual wording which is lost by the looser translation.

Expanse, Skt. dhātu, Tib. dbyings: The Sanskrit term has over twenty meanings. Many of those meanings are also present in the Tibetan equivalent. In the Vajra Vehicle teachings it is used as a replacement for the term emptiness that conveys a non-theoretical sense of the experience of emptiness. When used this way, it has the sense "expanse" because emptiness is experienced as an expanse in which all phenomena appear.

Fictional, Skt. saṃvṛti, Tib. kun rdzob: This term is paired with the term "superfactual" *q.v.* Until now these two terms have been translated as "relative" and "absolute" but the translations are nothing like the original terms. These terms are extremely important in the Buddhist teaching so it is very important that they be corrected but more than that, if the

actual meaning of these terms is not presented, then the teaching connected with them cannot be understood.

The Sanskrit term saṃvṛti means a deliberate invention, a fiction, a hoax. It refers to the mind of ignorance which, because of being obscured and so not seeing suchness, is not true but a fiction. The things that appear to the ignorance are therefore fictional. Nonetheless, the beings who live in this ignorance believe that the things that appear to them through the filter of ignorance are true, are real. Therefore, these beings live in fictional truth.

Fictional and superfactual: Fictional and superfactual are our greatly improved translations for "relative" and "absolute" respectively. Briefly, the original Sanskrit word for fiction means a deliberately produced *fiction* and refers to the world projected by a mind controlled by ignorance. The original word for superfact means "that *super*ior *fact* that appears on the surface of the mind of a noble one who has transcended saṃsāra" and refers to reality seen as it actually is. Relative and absolute do not convey this meaning at all and, when they are used, the meaning being presented is simply lost.

Fictional truth, Skt. saṃvṛtisatya, Tib. kun rdzob bden pa: See under "Fictional" for an explanation of this term.

Foremost instruction, Skt. upadeśha, Tib. man ngag: there are several types of instruction mentioned in Buddhist literature: there is the general level of instruction which is the meaning contained in the words of the texts of the tradition; on a more personal and direct level there is oral instruction which has been passed down from teacher to student from the time of the buddha; and on the most profound level there is upadeśha which are not only oral instructions provided by one's guru but are special, core instructions that come out of personal experience and which convey the teaching concisely and with the full weight of personal experience. Upadeśha are crucial

to the Other Emptiness and Vajra Vehicle systems because these are the special way of passing on the profound instructions needed for the disciple's realization.

Fortune, fortunate person, Tib. skal ldan: To meet with any given dharma teaching, a person must have accumulated the karmic fortune needed for such a rare opportunity, and this kind of person is then called "a fortunate one" or "fortunate person". This term is especially used in the Vajra Vehicle, whose teachings and practices are generally very hard to meet with.

Innate, Tib. gnyug ma: This is a standard term of the higher tantras used to mean the inner situation of samsaric mind, which is its in-dwelling or innate wisdom.

Intent, Tib. dgongs pa: The honorific term for the way that something is understood or for a mind that has a certain understanding.

Kagyu, Tib. bka' brgyud: There are four main schools of Buddhism in Tibet—Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya, and Gelug. Nyingma is the oldest school dating from about 800 A.D. Kagyu and Sakya both appeared in the 12th century A.D. Each of these three schools came directly from India. The Gelug school came later and did not come directly from India but came from the other three. The Nyingma school holds the tantric teachings called Great Completion (Dzogchen); the other three schools hold the tantric teachings called Mahāmudrā.

Kaya, Skt. kāya, Tib. sku: The Sanskrit term means a functional or coherent collection of parts, similar to the French "corps", and hence also comes to mean "a body". It is used in Tibetan Buddhist texts specifically to distinguish bodies belonging to the enlightened side from ones belonging to the samsaric side.

Enlightened being in Buddhism is said to be comprised of one or more kayas. It is most commonly explained to consist

of one, two, three, four, or five kāyas, though it is pointed out that there are infinite aspects to enlightened being and therefore it can also be said to consist of an infinite number of kāyas. In fact, these descriptions of enlightened being consisting of one or more kāyas are given for the sake of understanding what is beyond conceptual understanding so should not be taken as absolute statements.

The most common description of enlightened being is that it is comprised of three kāyas: dharma, saṃbhoga, and nirmāṇakāyas. Briefly stated, the dharmakāya is the body of truth, the saṃbhogakāya is the body replete with the good qualities of enlightenment, and the nirmāṇakāya is the body manifested into the worlds of saṃsara and nirvāṇa to benefit beings.

Dharmakāya refers to that aspect of enlightened being in which the being sees the truth for himself and, in doing so, fulfils his own needs for enlightenment. The dharmakāya is purely mind, without form. The remaining two bodies are summed up under the heading of rūpakāyas or form bodies manifested specifically to fulfil the needs of all un-enlightened beings. "Saṃbhogakāya" has been mostly translated as "body of enjoyment" or "body of rapture" but it is clearly stated in Buddhist texts on the subject that the name refers to a situation replete with what is useful, that is, to the fact that the saṃbhogakāya contains all of the good qualities of enlightenment as needed to benefit sentient beings. The saṃbhogakāya is extremely subtle and not accessible by most sentient beings; the nirmāṇakāya is a coarser manifestation which can reach sentient beings in many ways. Nirmāṇakāya should not be thought of as a physical body but as the capability to express enlightened being in whatever way is needed throughout all the different worlds of sentient beings. Thus, as much as it appears as a supreme buddha who shows the

dharma to beings, it also appears as anything needed within sentient beings worlds to give them assistance.

The three kāyas of enlightened being is taught in all levels of Buddhist teaching. It is especially important in Mahamudra and Great Completion and is taught there in a unique and very profound way.

The four kāyas usually refers to the three kāyas defined above with the addition of the svabhāvikakāya, the most essential body. This kāya is defined as the common emptiness of all three kāyas, that is, the fact that the three kāyas collectively are empty. The four kāyas occasionally refers to the three kāyas defined above with the addition of the mahāsukhakāya, the body of great bliss; the three kāyas collectively are enlightened being and therefore collectively are a body of the great bliss of enlightenment.

The five kāyas usually refers to the three kāyas plus the svabhāvikakāya to make four as defined above and then those four collectively are the mahāsukhakāya of great bliss.

Kayas and wisdoms, Tib. sku dang ye shes: Enlightened being might be empty of samsaric phenomena but it does have enlightened content. "Kāyas and wisdoms" or "bodies and wisdoms" is a stock phrase used to indicate either the content of enlightenment or to imply that it does have content.

Luminosity, Skt. prabhāsvara, Tib. 'od gsal ba: the core of mind, called mind's essence, has two aspects, parts, or factors as they are called. One is emptiness and the other is knowing. Luminosity is a metaphor for the fundamental knowing quality of the essence of mind. It is sometimes translated as "clear light" but that is a mistake that comes from not understanding how the words of the Sanskrit and the Tibetan, too, go together. It does not refer to a light that has the quality of clearness (something that makes no sense, actually!) but refers to the illuminative property which is the hallmark of

mind. Mind knows, that is what it does. Metaphorically, it is a luminosity that illuminates its own content. In both Sanskrit and Tibetan Buddhist literature, the term is frequently abbreviated just to gsal ba, "clarity", with the same meaning.

Maha Ati, Skt. mahāti, Tib. shin tu chen po: Mahā Ati or Ati Yoga is the name of the ninth and last of the nine vehicles taught in the Nyingma system of nine vehicles. The name "ati" literally means that it is the vehicle at the end of the sequence of all other vehicles. It is not only the final vehicle at the end of the sequence but the peak of all vehicles given that it presents reality more directly than any of the vehicles below it. It is therefore also called the king of vehicles.

Mahamudra, Skt. mahāmudrā, Tib. phyag rgya chen po: Mahāmudrā is the name of a set of ultimate teachings on reality and also of the reality itself. This is explained at length in the book *Gampopa's Mahamudra: The Five-Part Mahamudra of the Kagyus* by Tony Duff, published by Padma Karpo Translation Committee, 2008, ISBN 978-9937-2-0607-5.

Mind, Skt. chitta, Tib. sems: the complicated process of mind which occurs because there is ignorance. This sort of mind is a samsaric phenomenon. It is a dualistic mind.

Mindfulness, Skt. smṛiti, Tib. dran pa: A particular mental event, one that has the ability to keep mind on its object. Together with alertness, it is one of the two causes of developing śhamatha. See under alertness for an explanation.

Nail, Tib. gzer: Nail is used to mean an instruction or a procedure by which a particular point of understanding or realization is "pegged" or "pinned" down so that it does not leave the practitioner's experience.

Noble one, Skt. ārya, Tib. 'phags pa: In Buddhism, a noble one is a being who has become spiritually advanced to the point that he has passed beyond cyclic existence. According to the

Buddha, the beings in cyclic existence were ordinary beings, spiritual commoners, and the beings who had passed beyond it were special, the nobility.

Outflow, Skt. saśrava, Tib. zag pa: Outflows occur when wisdom loses its footing and falls into the elaborations of dualistic mind. Therefore, anything with duality also has outflows. This is sometimes translated as "defiled" or "conditioned" but these fail to capture the meaning. The idea is that wisdom can remain self-contained in its own unique sphere but, when it loses its ability to stay within itself, it starts to have leakages into dualism that are defilements on the wisdom. See also un-outflowed.

Post-attainment, Tib. rjes thob: See under equipoise and post-attainment.

Prajna, Skt. prajñā, Tib. shes rab: A Sanskrit term for the type of mind that makes good and precise distinctions between this and that and hence which arrives at correct understanding. It has been translated as "wisdom" but that is not correct because it is, generally speaking, a mental event belonging to dualistic mind where "wisdom" is used to refer to the non-dualistic knower of a buddha. Moreover, the main feature of prajñā is its ability to distinguish correctly between one thing and another and hence to arrive at a correct understanding.

Provisional and definitive meaning, Skt. neyartha and nitartha, Tib. drangs don and nges don: This is a pair of terms used to distinguish which is an ultimate or final teaching and which is not. A teaching which guides a student along to a certain understanding where the understanding led to is not an ultimate understanding is called "provisional meaning". The teaching is not false even though it does not show the final meaning; it is a technique of skilful means used to lead a student in steps to the final meaning. A teaching which shows a student the final meaning directly is called "definitive

meaning". The understanding presented cannot be refined or shown in a more precise way; it is the final and actual understanding to be understood. These terms are most often used in Buddhism when discussing the status of the three turnings of the wheel of dharma.

Rational mind, Tib. blo: The Kagyu, Nyingma, and Jonang traditions use this term pejoratively for the most part, using it to mean dualistic mind. It is the villain, so to speak, which needs to be removed from the equation in order to obtain enlightenment. This term is commonly translated simply as mind but that causes confusion with the many other words that are also translated simply as mind. It is not just another mind but is specifically the sort of mind that creates the situation of this and that (ratio in Latin) and hence upholds the duality of samsara. It is the very opposite of the essence of mind. Thus, this is a key term which should be noted and not just glossed over as "mind".

The Gelugpa tradition does have a positive use for this mind and their documents will sometimes use this term in a positive sense; they claim that a buddha has an enlightened type of this mind. That is not wrong; one could refer to the ability of a buddha's wisdom to make a distinction between this and that with the term "rational mind". However, the Kagyu and Nyingma traditions in their Mahāmudrā and Great Completion teachings, reserve this term for the dualistic mind. In their teachings, it is the villain, so to speak, which needs to be removed from the practitioner's being in order to obtain enlightenment.

This term has been commonly translated simply as "mind" but that fails to identify this term properly and leaves it confused with the many other words that are also translated simply as "mind". It is not just another mind but is specifically the sort of mind that creates the situation of this and that (*ratio* in Latin) and hence, at least in the teachings of

Kagyu and Nyingma, upholds the duality of saṃsāra. In that case, it is the very opposite of the essence of mind. Thus, this is a key term which should be noted and not just glossed over as "mind".

Rigpa, Tib. rig pa: Rigpa literally means to know in the sense of "I see!" It is used at all levels of meaning from the coarsest everyday sense of knowing something to the deepest sense of knowing something as presented in the teachings on wisdom. To translate it as "awareness" which is common practice these days is a poor practice; there are many kinds of awareness but there is only one rigpa and besides, rigpa is substantially more than just awareness. Since this is such an important term and since it lacks an equivalent in English, I choose not to translate it. However, it will be helpful in reading the text to understanding the meaning as just given.

This is the term used to indicate enlightened mind as experienced by the practitioner on the path of these practices. The term itself specifically refers to the dynamic knowing quality of mind. It absolutely does not mean a simple registering, as implied by the word "awareness" which unfortunately is often used to translate this term. There is no word in English that exactly matches it, though the idea of "seeing" or "insight on the spot" is very close. Proof of this is found in the fact that the original Sanskrit term "vidyā" is actually the root of all words in English that start with "vid" and mean "to see", for example, "video", "vision", and so on. Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, who was particular skilled at getting Tibetan words into English, also stated that this term rigpa really did not have a good equivalent in English, though he thought that "insight" was the closest. My own conclusion after hearing extensive teaching on it is that rigpa is just best left untranslated.

Samsara, Skt. saṃsāra, Tib. 'khor ba: This is the most general name for the type of existence in which sentient beings live.

It refers to the fact that they continue on from one existence to another, always within the enclosure of births that are produced by ignorance and experienced as unsatisfactory. The original Sanskrit means to be constantly going about, here and there. The Tibetan term literally means "cycling", because of which it is frequently translated into English with "cyclic existence" though that is not quite the meaning of the term.

Satva and sattva: According to the Tibetan tradition established at the time of the great translation work done at Samye under the watch of Padmasambhava not to mention the one hundred and sixty-three of the greatest Buddhist scholars of Sanskrit-speaking India, there is a difference of meaning between the Sanskrit terms "satva" and "sativa", with satva meaning "an heroic kind of being" and "sattva" meaning simply "a being". According to the Tibetan tradition established under the advice of the Indian scholars mentioned above, satva is correct for the words Vajrasatva and bodhisatva, whereas sattva is correct for the words samayasattva, samādhisattva, and jñānasattva, and is also used alone to refer to any or all of these three satvas.

All Tibetan texts produced since the time of the great translations conform to this system and all Tibetan experts agree that this is correct, but Western translators of Tibetan texts have for last few hundreds of years claimed that they know better and have "satva" to "sattva" in every case, causing confusion amongst Westerners confronted by the correct spellings. Recently, publications by Western Sanskrit scholars have been appearing in which these great experts finally admit that they were wrong and that the Tibetan system is and always has been correct!

Secret Mantra, Tib. gsang sngags: Another name for the Vajra Vehicle or the tantric teachings.

Shamatha, Skt. śhamatha, Tib. gzhi gnas: The name of one of the two main practices of meditation used in the Buddhist system to gain insight into reality. This practice creates a foundation of one-pointedness of mind which can then be used to focus the insight of the other practice, vipaśhyanā. If the development of śhamatha is taken through to completion, the result is a mind that sits stably on its object without any effort and a body which is filled with ease. Altogether, this result of the practice is called "the creation of workability of body and mind".

Shine forth, shining forth, Tib. shar ba: This term means "to dawn" or "to come forth into visibility" either in the outer physical world or in the inner world of mind.

It is heavily used in texts on meditation to indicate the process of something coming forth into mind. There are other terms with this specific meaning but most of them also imply the process of dawning within a samsaric mind. "Shine forth" is special because it does not have that restricted meaning; it refers to the process of something dawning in any type of mind, un-enlightened and enlightened. It is an important term for the higher tantras of Mahāmudrā and Great Completion texts where there is a great need to refer to the simple fact of something dawning in mind especially in enlightened mind but also in un-enlightened mind.

In the Tibetan language, this term stands out and immediately conveys the meaning explained above. There are words in English like "to appear" that might seem easier to read than "shine forth", but they do not stand out and catch the attention sufficiently. Moreover, terms such as "appear" accurately translate other Tibetan terms which specifically indicate an un-enlightened context or a certain type of sensory appearance, so they do not convey the meaning of this term. There will be many times where this term's specific meaning of something occurring in any type of mind is

crucial to a full understanding of the expression under consideration. For example, "shining-forth liberation" means that some content of mind, such as a thought, comes forth in either un-enlightened or enlightened mind, and that, on coming forth, is liberated there in that mind.

State, Tib. ngang: A state is a certain, ongoing situation. In Buddhist meditation in general, there are various states that a practitioner has to enter and remain in as part of developing the meditation.

Sugatagarbha, Tib. bde war gshegs pa'i snying po: A Sanskrit term literally meaning "the birthplace of those who go to bliss" and used as a name for the buddha nature. The buddha nature is the potential that we all have which allows us to go to the state of enlightenment, the blissful state beyond all the unsatisfactoriness of normal existence. Sugatagarbha has the same basic meaning as tathāgatagarbha though its use indicates a more practical way of talking whereas tathagātagarbha is more theoretical. A discussion which uses the term sugatagarbha is one that is talking about the practical realities of an essence that can be or is being developed into enlightened being.

Superfactual, Skt. paramārtha, Tib. don dam: This term is paired with the term "fictional" *q.v.* Until now these two terms have been translated as "relative" and "absolute" but those translations are nothing like the original terms. These terms are extremely important in the Buddhist teaching so it is very important that their translations be corrected but, more than that, if the actual meaning of these terms is not presented, the teaching connected with them cannot be understood.

The Sanskrit term parāmartha literally means "a superior or holy kind of fact" and refers to the wisdom mind possessed by those who have developed themselves spiritually to the point of having transcended samsara. That wisdom is *superior* to an

ordinary, un-developed person's consciousness and the *facts* that appear on its surface are superior compared to the facts that appear on the ordinary person's consciousness. Therefore, it is superfact or the holy fact, more literally. What this wisdom sees is true for the beings who have it, therefore what the wisdom sees is superfactual truth.

Superfactual truth, Skt. paramārthasatya, Tib. don dam bden pa: See under "Superfactual" for an explanation of this term.

Tathagatagarbha, Skt. tathāgatagarbha, Tib. de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po: See under sugatagarbha.

The nature, Tib. rang bzhin: The nature is one of the three characteristics—entity, nature, and un-stopped compassionate activity—of the core of mind. Using this term emphasizes that the empty entity does have a nature. In other words, its use explicitly shows that the core of mind is not merely empty. If you ask "Well, what is that nature like?" The answer is that it is luminosity, it is wisdom.

Unaltered or uncontrived, Tib. ma bcos pa: The opposite of "altered" and "contrived". Something which has not been altered from its native state; something which has been left just as it is.

Un-outflowed, Skt. aśrava, Tib. zag pa med pa: See also "outflowed". Un-outflowed dharmas are ones that are connected with wisdom that has not lost its footing and leaked out into a defiled state; it is self-contained wisdom without any taint of dualistic mind and its apparatus.

Vehicle of Characteristics, Tib. mtshan nyid theg pa: One of of many names for the conventional Great Vehicle. It is given the name because the teachings in it rely on a conventional approach in which logic is used to find reality and in doing so, the characteristics of phenomena are a key part of the explanations of the system.

View, meditation, and conduct, Tib. lta sgom spyod: A formulation of the teachings that contains all of the meaning of the path.

Vipashyana, Tib. lhag mthong: The Sanskrit name for one of the two main practices of meditation needed in the Buddhist system for gaining insight into reality. The other one, shamatha, keeps the mind focussed while this one, vipaśhyanā, looks piercingly into the nature of things.

Wisdom, Skt. jñāna, Tib. ye shes: This is a fruition term that refers to the kind of mind, the kind of knower possessed by a buddha. Sentient beings do have this kind of knower but it is covered over by a very complex apparatus for knowing, dualistic mind. If they practise the path to buddhahood, they will leave behind their obscuration and return to having this kind of knower.

The original Sanskrit term has the sense of knowing in the most simple and immediate way. This sort of knowing is present at the core of every being's mind. Therefore, the Tibetans called it "the particular type of awareness which is there primordially". Because of their wording, it is often called "primordial wisdom" in English translations but that is too much. It is just wisdom in the sense of the most fundamental knowing possible.

SUPPORTS FOR STUDY

I have been encouraged over the years by all of my teachers to pass on the knowledge I have accumulated in a lifetime dedicated to study and practice, primarily in the Tibetan tradition of Buddhism. On the one hand, they have encouraged me to teach. On the other, they are concerned that, while many general books on Buddhism have been and are being published, there are few books that present the actual texts of the tradition. Therefore they, together with a number of major figures in the Buddhist book publishing world, have also encouraged me to translate and publish high quality translations of individual texts of the tradition.

My teachers always remark with great appreciation on the extraordinary amount of teaching that I have heard in this life. It allows for highly informed, accurate translations of a sort not usually seen. Briefly, I spent the 1970's studying, practising, then teaching the Gelugpa system at Chenrezig Institute, Australia, where I was a founding member and also the first Australian to be ordained as a monk in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. In 1980, I moved to the United States to

study at the feet of the Vidyadhara Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche. I stayed in his Vajradhatu community, now called Shambhala, where I studied and practised all the Karma Kagyu, Nyingma, and Shambhala teachings being presented there and was a senior member of the Nalanda Translation Committee. After the vidyadhara's nirvana, I moved in 1992 to Nepal, where I have been continuously involved with the study, practise, translation, and teaching of the Kagyu system and especially of the Nyingma system of Great Completion. In recent years, I have spent extended times in Tibet with the greatest living Tibetan masters of Great Completion, receiving very pure transmissions of the ultimate levels of this teaching directly in Tibetan and practising them there in retreat. In that way, I have studied and practised extensively not in one Tibetan tradition as is usually done, but in three of the four Tibetan traditions—Gelug, Kagyu, and Nyingma—and also in the Theravada tradition, too.

With that as a basis, I have taken a comprehensive and long term approach to the work of translation. For any language, one first must have the lettering needed to write the language. Therefore, as a member of the Nalanda Translation Committee, I spent some years in the 1980's making Tibetan word-processing software and high-quality Tibetan fonts. After that, reliable lexical works are needed. Therefore, during the 1990's I spent some years writing the *Illuminator Tibetan-English Dictionary* and a set of treatises on Tibetan grammar, preparing a variety of key Tibetan reference works needed for the study and translation of Tibetan Buddhist texts, and giving our Tibetan software the tools needed to translate and research Tibetan texts. During this time, I also translated full-time for various Tibetan gurus and ran the Drukpa

Kagyu Heritage Project—at the time the largest project in Asia for the preservation of Tibetan Buddhist texts. With the dictionaries, grammar texts, and specialized software in place, and a wealth of knowledge, I turned my attention in the year 2000 to the translation and publication of important texts of Tibetan Buddhist literature.

Padma Karpo Translation Committee (PKTC) was set up to provide a home for the translation and publication work. The committee focusses on producing books containing the best of Tibetan literature, and, especially, books that meet the needs of practitioners. At the time of writing, PKTC has published a wide range of books that, collectively, make a complete program of study for those practising Tibetan Buddhism, and especially for those interested in the higher tantras. All in all, you will find many books both free and for sale on the PKTC web-site. Most are available both as paper editions and e-books.

It would take up too much space here to present an extensive guide to our books and how they can be used as the basis for a study program. However, a guide of that sort is available on the PKTC web-site, whose address is on the copyright page of this book and we recommend that you read it to see how this book fits into the overall scheme of PKTC publications. In short, given that this book is about Other Emptiness, other books of interest would be:

- *The Noble One Called "Point of Passage Wisdom", A Great Vehicle Sutra*, the root sutra of the twenty sūtras of Other Emptiness of the third turning of the wheel;

- *Other Emptiness, A Complete Explanation of the Zhantong System*, a major and exceptionally complete exposition of Other Emptiness with many Tibetan texts and teachings included;
- *Instructions for the Practice of the View of Other Emptiness*, a text by the first Jamgon Kongtrul showing the practice of Other Emptiness according to the Jonang tradition;
- *The Lion's Roar that Proclaims Zhantong*, a text by Ju Mipham which shows the view of Other Emptiness then goes through arguments raised by Tsongkhapa's followers against the Other Emptiness system;
- *Maitripa's Writings on the View*, a selection of important texts written by the Indian master Maitrīpa showing his understanding of the Other Emptiness approach;
- *A Juggernaut of the Non-Dual View, Ultimate Teachings of the Second Drukchen, Gyalwang Je*, a set of sixty-six teachings on the non-dual view of the tantras which shows clearly the Other Emptiness view of the Kagyus.

These texts on Kagyu Mahāmudrā indirectly show the meaning of Other Emptiness given that Other Emptiness is the view underlying Kagyu Mahāmudrā:

- *Drukchen Padma Karpo's Collected Works on Mahamudra*
- *Dusum Khyenpa's Songs and Teachings*

- *Gampopa's Mahamudra, The Five-Part Mahamudra of the Kagyus*

We make a point of including, where possible, the relevant Tibetan texts in Tibetan script in our books. We also make them available in electronic editions that can be downloaded free from our web-site, as discussed below. The Tibetan texts for this book are included at the back of the book.

Electronic Resources

PKTC has developed a complete range of electronic tools to facilitate the study and translation of Tibetan texts. For many years now, this software has been a prime resource for Tibetan Buddhist centres throughout the world, including in Tibet itself. It is available through the PKTC web-site.

The wordprocessor TibetDoc has the only complete set of tools for creating, correcting, and formatting Tibetan text according to the norms of the Tibetan language. It can also be used to make texts with mixed Tibetan and English or other languages. Extremely high quality Tibetan fonts, based on the forms of Tibetan calligraphy learned from old masters from pre-Communist Chinese Tibet, are also available. Because of their excellence, these typefaces have achieved a legendary status amongst Tibetans.

TibetDoc is used to prepare electronic editions of Tibetan texts in the PKTC text input office in Asia. Tibetan texts are often corrupt so the input texts are carefully corrected prior to distribution. After that, they are made available through

the PKTC web-site. These electronic texts are not careless productions like so many of the Tibetan texts found on the web, but are highly reliable editions useful to non-scholars and scholars alike. Some of the larger collections of these texts are for purchase, but most are available for free download.

The electronic texts can be read, searched, and even made into an electronic library using either TibetDoc or our other software, TibetD Reader. Like TibetDoc, TibetD Reader is advanced software with many capabilities made specifically to meet the needs of reading and researching Tibetan texts. PKTC software is for purchase but we make a free version of TibetD Reader available for free download on the PKTC web-site.

A key feature of TibetDoc and Tibet Reader is that Tibetan terms in texts can be looked up on the spot using PKTC's electronic dictionaries. PKTC also has several electronic dictionaries—some Tibetan-Tibetan and some Tibetan-English—and a number of other reference works. The *Illuminator Tibetan-English Dictionary* is renowned for its completeness and accuracy.

This combination of software, texts, reference works, and dictionaries that work together seamlessly has become famous over the years. It has been the basis of many, large publishing projects within the Tibetan Buddhist community around the world for over thirty years and is popular amongst all those needing to work with Tibetan language or deepen their understanding of Buddhism through Tibetan texts.

TIBETAN TEXTS

༄༅། །རྒྱ་གར་སྐད་དུ་མདྷྱ་མ་ཀ་སཾ་གཱི་ཏི། བོད་སྐད་དུ། དབུ་མ་ཡང་དག་པར་བརྗོད་པ།

༄༅། །འཇམ་དཔལ་གཞོན་ནུར་གྱུར་པ་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ། །འདི་སྐད་བདག་གིས་ཐོས་པ་དུས་གཅིག་ན། རྗེ་བཙུན་ཆེན་པོ་དཔལ་བཞད་པའི་རྡོ་རྗེ་མཚན་ཡོངས་སུ་གྲགས་པ་རྣལ་འབྱོར་གྱི་དབང་ཕྱུག་མི་ལ་རས་པ་རྒྱུ་བར་སྤྲུལ་སྐུའི་ཕོ་བྲང་སྐུ་གསུང་ཐུགས་བདེ་ཆེན་གྱི་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་དུ་ཉིད་ལས་གཞན་མ་ཡིན་པའི་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཀྱི་ལྷའི་ཚོགས་ཆེན་པོ་དང་ཐབས་གཅིག་ཏུ་བཞུགས་སོ། །དེའི་ཚེ་ལྷ་མ་སྲིན་སྡེ་བརྒྱད་རིགས་པ་ཅན་གྱི་སྡེ་དཔོན་དུ་གྱུར་པ་རྣམས་སོ་སོ་རང་རང་གི་རིགས་དང་མཐུན་པའི་འཁོར་དཔུང་བུ་ཚང་གི་ཚོགས་དང་བཅས་པ་དང་། འཇིག་རྟེན་མིག་བསྒྱུར་གྱི་ཌཱ་ཀི་མ་རྣམས་སློག་ཅིང་མཛེས་པ་མི་མ་གཞོན་ནུའི་ཆ་བྱད་དུ་བསྒྱུར་ནས་ལྷབ་ལྷུབ་དར་གྱི་གོས་དང་། རིན་པོ་ཆེ་སྣ་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་རྒྱན་དང་། སྤུད་པ་དོ་ཤལ་འཕྲེང་བ་སལ་སིལ་དང་། སེ་མོ་དོ་ལ་སོགས་པའི་ཆས་ཀྱིས་རབ་ཏུ་བརྒྱན་ཏེ། བྲན་དང་གཡོག་འཁོར་དུ་མའི་

ཚོགས་དང་བཅས་པ་མདུན་གྱི་ནམ་མཁའ་ལ་ལྷགས་ནས་ལྷ་མ་སྲིན་དེ་རྣམས་
ཀྱིས། རྗེ་བཙུན་ལ་མེ་ཏོག་སྣ་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་ཆར་ཕབ། སྤོས་དང་རོལ་མོ་སྣ་
ཚོགས་ཀྱི་མཆོད་པ་ཕུལ། བཟའ་བ་དང་བཅའ་བ་བརྒྱ་ནོམ་པ་སྣ་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་སྤྱན་
གཟིགས་དྲངས་ནས། རྗེ་བཙུན་ཁྱེད་རང་གི་ཐུགས་ལས་གྲུབ་པའི་རྟོགས་
ཚད། དུས་གསུམ་སངས་རྒྱས་རྣམས་ཀྱི་དགོངས་པ། མཐར་ཐུག་ལམ་
གྱི་སྐྱིལ་ས་འདི་ལས་མེད་ཅེས་པ། ངེས་དོན་གྱི་ཆོས་ཞིག་ངེད་འདིར་ཚོགས་
པའི་ལྷ་མ་སྲིན་རྣམས་ལ་གསུང་བར་ཞུ་འཚལ་ཞུས་པས། དེའི་དུས་སུ་རྗེ་
བཙུན་གྱི་རྟོགས་ཚད་ལྟ་བའི་མགུར། གནས་ལུགས་ངེས་དོན་འབབ་ཞིག
ཏུག་གདམས་པ་འདི་རྣམས་ཡིན་གསུངས་ནས་མགུར་བཞེངས་པ། །ཡོངས་
བལ་བོད་གཉིས་ཀྱི་ས་མཚམས་ན། ཡུལ་ཡ་མཚན་ཆེ་བའི་དིང་མ་བྲིན། །
གྲོང་འདོད་དགུ་འབྱུང་བའི་ཚོང་འདུས་ན། །ལྷ་སྨན་བཙུན་མི་ལ་དཔལ་འགྲོ
བ། །དཔའ་བརྗིད་གངས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་མོ་ནི། །ཚེ་གཡུང་དྲུང་བརྟན་པའི་ཟུར་
ཕུད་ཅན། །དེ་མཚན་སྨན་བཀྲ་ཤིས་ཚེ་རིང་མ། །རི་ན་བུན་འཐིབས་ཀྱི་
གཡོན་ཟུར་ན། །འབྲོག་རྨ་གཡང་གངས་ཀྱིས་བསྐོར་བ་དེ། །སྨན་ལུང་
ཆུ་བར་མ་ལགས་སམ། །གནས་དེ་ན་རྩེ་གཅིག་ཉམས་ལེན་པ། །ང་མི་ལ་
རྣལ་འབྱོར་མི་ཟེར་རམ། །མི་ང་ལ་སྔོན་ཆད་མཐོ་འཚམ་ཞིང་། །ཅི་འདྲི་
བཤད་གད་བྱེད་པ་སྟེ། །ཁྱེད་ཅག་འཇིག་རྟེན་ལྷ་མ་སྲིན། །ཤིན་ཏུ་དྲེགས་
ཤིང་མི་བསྲུན་པས། །རྣལ་འབྱོར་ཡོངས་ཀྱི་དྲོད་སྨྱུལ་བ། །དེ་རིང་འདིར་
ཚོགས་མ་ལགས་སམ། །མདང་སང་དགུང་ཟླ་སྤུ་མ་ལ། །ཡིད་འཕྲོག་བུ་
མོ་མཛེས་མ་ལྔ། །ཟླ་མེད་མཆོག་ཏུ་སེམས་བསྐྱེད་དེ། །ཅི་འདོད་དངོས་
གྲུབ་ཁས་བླངས་ནས། །མི་སྣང་མཁའ་ལ་འཕུར་ནས་ཐལ། །དེ་ཡང་ངོ་
མཚར་ཁྱེད་ཅག་ལྔ། །དགུང་དོ་ནུབ་དཀར་གསལ་ཟླ་མདངས་ལ། །སྦྲུལ

པའི་བུད་མེད་བཞིན་བཟང་མ། །གར་བསྒྱུར་སྒེག་མོའི་ཆ་བྱད་ཅན། །ལྷབ་ལྷུབ་དར་གྱི་ན་བཟའ་དང་། །དོ་ཤལ་རྒྱན་གྱིས་མཛེས་པ་ཡི། །གཙོ་མོ་ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་མདོང་གསོལ་ནས། །སྡེ་བརྒྱད་དྲེགས་པའི་ལྷ་མ་སྲིན། །སྡེ་དང་དཔུང་དང་དམག་མི་དང་། །རིགས་མཐུན་འཁོར་གྱི་ཚོགས་བཅས་རྣམས། །ནམ་མཁའ་ཁེངས་པའི་མཆོད་སྤྲིན་དང་། །རོ་བརྒྱ་ལྡན་པའི་ཁ་ཟས་དང་། །སྣ་ཚོགས་རོལ་མོ་ཕུལ་ནས་ཀྱང་། །ངེས་དོན་དགོངས་པ་ཞུ་བ་དེ། །ཁྱེད་སྣང་སྲིད་ལྷ་འདྲེ་མ་ལགས་སམ། །ཚིག་དེ་སྐད་ཟློ་ན་རྣ་བར་སླན། །ངག་བདེན་པས་བསྒྲོལ་ན་ཀུན་ཀྱང་ཉན། །ད་ཅ་ཅ་མ་ཟེར་སླུ་འདི་ཉོན། །སྤྱིར་ཁམས་གསུམ་འཁོར་བའི་སེམས་ཅན་ལ། །འདོད་པའི་བྱུང་རྒྱལ་སྣ་ཚོགས་ཡོད། །ངར་འཛིན་ལྷ་བ་ཐ་དད་ཡོད། །དེ་དག་སྤྱོད་རྩོལ་སྣ་ཚོགས་ཡོད། །གཞི་བདག་ཏུ་ལྟ་བ་ཤིན་ཏུ་མང་། །ཁྱེད་བློ་དམན་རྣམས་ཀྱི་བློ་ངོ་དང་། །བསྟུན་ནས་ཀུན་མཁྱེན་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱིས། །ཐམས་ཅད་ཡོད་ཅེས་གསུངས་པ་ཡིན། །དོན་དམ་བདེན་པའི་དབང་དུ་ནི། །བགེགས་པས་སངས་རྒྱས་ཉིད་ཀྱང་མེད། །སྒོམ་པ་པོ་མེད་བསྒོམ་བྱ་མེད། །བགྲོད་བྱ་ས་དང་ལམ་རྟགས་མེད། །འབྲས་བུ་སྐུ་དང་ཡེ་ཤེས་མེད། །དེ་ཕྱིར་མྱ་ངན་འདས་པ་མེད། །མིང་དང་ཚིག་གིས་བཏགས་པ་ཙམ། །ཁམས་གསུམ་བརྟན་དང་གཡོ་བར་བཅས། །གདོད་ནས་མ་གྲུབ་སྐྱེ་བ་མེད། །གཞི་མེད་ལྷན་ཅིག་སྐྱེས་པ་མེད། །ལས་དང་ལས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་སྨིན་མེད། །དེ་ཕྱིར་འཁོར་བའི་མིང་ཡང་མེད། །མཐར་ཐུག་དོན་ལ་དེ་ལྟར་གདའ། །ཨེ་མ་སེམས་ཅན་མེད་གྱུར་ན། །དུས་གསུམ་སངས་རྒྱས་ཅི་ལས་བྱུང་། །རྒྱུ་མེད་འབྲས་བུ་མི་སྲིད་པས། །ཀུན་རྫོབ་བདེན་པའི་དབང་དུ་ནི། །འཁོར་བ་དང་ནི་མྱ་ངན་འདས། །ཐམས་ཅད་ཡོད་ཅེས་ཐུབ་པས་གསུངས། །ཡོད

པ་དངོས་པོར་སྣང་བ་དང་། །མེད་པ་སྟོང་པའི་ཆོས་ཉིད་གཉིས། །ངོ་བོ་དབྱེར་མེད་རོ་གཅིག་པས། །རང་རིག་གཞན་རིག་ཡོད་མིན་ཏེ། །ཐམས་ཅད་ཟུང་འཇུག་ཡངས་པ་ཡིན། །དེ་ལྟར་རྟོགས་པའི་མཁས་པ་ཡིས། །རྣམ་ཤེས་མ་མཐོང་ཡེ་ཤེས་མཐོང་། །སེམས་ཅན་མ་མཐོང་སངས་རྒྱས་མཐོང་། །ཆོས་ཅན་མ་མཐོང་ཆོས་ཉིད་མཐོང་། །དེ་ལས་སྙིང་རྗེའི་ཤུགས་ཕྱུང་སྟེ། །སྟོབས་དང་མི་འཇིགས་གཟུངས་ལ་སོགས། །སངས་རྒྱས་ཡོན་ཏན་གང་ཡིན་པ། །ནོར་བུ་རིན་ཆེན་ཚུལ་དུ་འབྱུང་། །དེ་རྣལ་འབྱོར་ང་ཡི་རྟོགས་ཚད་ཡིན། །ཁྱེད་འདིར་ཚོགས་ལྷ་འདྲེའི་རྣ་ལམ་དུ། །ཆོས་ཟབ་མོ་བས་ཀྱང་བན་སླྲ་སླན། །ཨ་ཧི་ར་ཡི་རྒྱལ་ཁམས་ན། །མཁས་པ་བས་ཀྱང་བླུན་པོ་བྲིན། །དུར་ཁྲོད་སྨྱུལ་བའི་ཕ་སྦྱང་རྣམས། །སེང་གེའི་ང་རོས་འཇིགས་ཤིང་སྐྲག །འགའ་ཞིག་སྐལ་ལྡན་ཡོད་སྲིད་ན། །འདི་དོན་ཐོས་པས་གྲོལ་བར་འགྱུར། །ཡར་མི་ང་ལ་དགའ་བའི་ཉམས་ཤིག་སྐྱེས། །སོ་དགའ་ཡོ་སྐྱིད་དོ་ཐོ་ལེ་རྒྱལ། །ཞེས་པའི་མགུར་དེ་སྐད་གསུངས་ནས་དེ་དག་གི་དོན་བཤད་པ། སྤྱིར་སྟོན་པ་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ཞལ་ནས་ཆོས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོ་བརྒྱད་ཁྲི་བཞི་སྟོང་ཞེ་སྙེད་ཅིག་གསུངས་པ་དེ་དག་ཐམས་ཅད་གདུལ་བྱ་གང་ཟག་གི་བློ་ངོ་དང་བསྟུན་ནས་ཐེག་པ་སྣ་ཚོགས་སུ་བསྟན་པ་ཡིན་གྱི། མཐར་ཐུག་སྐྱོལ་ས་གཅིག་ལས་མེད། གཅིག་པོ་དེ་ཆོས་ཉིད་མ་བཅོས་པ་ཡིན། དེ་ཡིན་ལུགས་ཤེས་པས་མི་གྲོལ་ཏེ། ལམ་སྦྱངས་པས་མངོན་དུ་འགྱུར་དགོས། དེ་ལ་ལམ་གྱི་ངོ་བོ་སྟོང་པ་སྙིང་རྗེ་ཟུང་འཇུག་ཡིན། ལམ་གྱི་བགྲོད་ཚུལ་བསམ་གྱིས་མི་ཁྱབ་པ་ཞེ་སྙེད་ཅིག་ཡོད་ཀྱང་མདོ་རྫིལ་གྱིས་དྲིལ་ན་ཐབས་ཤེས་ཟུང་འཇུག་གམ། བདེན་གཉིས་དབྱེར་མེད་དུ་འཁྱེར་འཚལ་ལོ། དེ་སྐད་ཅེས་བཀའ་སྩལ་པ་དང་བཀྲ་ཤིས་ཚེ་རིང་མ་ལ་སོགས་པ

ལྷ་དང་མི་དང་ལྷ་མ་ཡིན་དང་དྲི་ཟར་བཅས་པའི་འཇིག་རྟེན་ཡི་རང་སྟེ། རྗེ་བཙུན་ཆེན་པོས་གསུངས་པ་ལ་མངོན་པར་བསྟོད་དོ།། ।།དེས་རྗེ་བཙུན་ཆེན་པོ་བཞད་པ་རྡོ་རྗེའི་ལྟ་བའི་མགུར་དགུ་མ་ཡང་དག་པར་བརྗོད་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་རྫོགས་སོ།།

༄༅། །རྣལ་འབྱོར་གྱི་དབང་ཕྱུག་མི་ལ་རས་པའི་མཐར་ཐུག་ལྟ་སྒོམ་སྤྱོད་འབྲས་བུ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ལས། །ལྟ་བ་སྟོང་པའི་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཡིན། སྒོམ་པ་འོད་གསལ་འཛིན་མེད་ཡིན། །སྤྱོད་པ་ཆགས་མེད་རྒྱུན་ཞིག་ཡིན། །འབྲས་བུ་དྲི་མེད་གཅེར་བུ་ཡིན། །ལྟ་བ་སྟོང་པའི་ཡེ་ཤེས་དེ། །ཁ་ལྟ་རྒྱུད་པར་ཤོར་ཉེན་གདའ། །དོན་ལ་ངེས་ཤེས་མ་སྐྱེས་ན། །ཚིག་གིས་བདག་འཛིན་གྲོལ་བ་མེད། །དེས་ན་ངེས་ཤེས་དྲག་པོ་གཅེས། །སྒོམ་པ་འོད་གསལ་འཛིན་མེད་དེ། །གནས་པ་རྒྱུད་པར་འཆོར་ཉེན་གདའ། །ཡེ་ཤེས་ནང་ནས་མ་ཤར་ན། །གནས་པ་བརྟན་ཀྱང་གྲོལ་ཆ་མེད། །བྱིང་རྒོད་ལ་ཡེ་ཤེས་མི་སྐྱེ་བས། །དེས་ན་མ་ཡེངས་དྲན་པ་གཅེས། །སྤྱོད་པ་ཆགས་མེད་རྒྱུན་ཞིག་དེ། །ཐོ་ཅོ་རྒྱུད་པར་འཆོར་ཉེན་གདའ། །ལྟ་སྒོམ་གྲོགས་སུ་མ་ཤར་ན། །བརྟུལ་ཞུགས་སྤྱོད་པ་ཆོས་བརྒྱད་གྲོགས། །དེས་ན་ཞེན་མེད་སྒྲིབ་མེད་གཅེས། །འབྲས་བུ་དྲི་མེད་གཅེར་བུ་དེ། །མཚན་མའི་ན་བཟའ་གསོལ་ཉེན་གདའ། །འཁྲུལ་པ་ནང་ནས་མ་ཞིག་ན། །ཡིད་སྨོན་བསྒོམས་ཀྱང་དོན་གོ་ཆུང་། །དེས་ན་འཁྲུལ་པ་ཞིག་པ་གཅེས། །ཞེས་གསུངས་པས། །ཚོགས་པ་ཀུན་ལ་ངེས་ཤེས་སྐྱེས་ཤིང་། །དགའ་སྤྲོ་ཡི་རངས་པར་གྱུར་ཏོ། །ཞེས་གསུངས་སོ།། ༎

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Other Emptiness, or Zhantong in Tibetan, is the most profound view taught by the Buddha. It is the very basis of the majority of Tibetan Buddhist schools, though it has been overshadowed by the views of some schools who have argued against it. As a result, it has not been well understood in the West, where it is often thought of as a complicated and possibly questionable philosophical view. In fact, Other Emptiness is the penultimate teaching of the sutras and the root of all tantras. This book shows for the first time that the Buddha did not teach this ultimate of views as a complicated philosophy for scholarly argument but as a practical view to be used for the attainment of enlightenment.

The teachings of the Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism have been based on Other Emptiness from the beginning. The early lineage-holder Milarepa sang many songs which present it and two especially important ones are presented in this book. Fresh translations of the songs come with full explanations based on teachings heard from the Kagyu masters Khenpo Tsultrim Gyatso, Thrangu Rinpoche, and others. These explanations have the special feature of being the actual instructions of the lineage. They are practical in nature and free of the convoluted philosophical argument often but mistakenly claimed to be the meaning of Other Emptiness. Thus, for the first time in English, the teaching of Other Emptiness is clearly shown as a practical instruction, using the teachings of the Kagyu lineage.

The author has received extensive explanations on the Middle Way view during nearly forty years of close association with eminent teachers of all four Tibetan Buddhist schools, so has an unusually clear and comprehensive understanding of the Other Emptiness view. He has recently written a series of books to clarify the meaning of Other Emptiness. This book has an extensive introduction which will go far towards clarifying the view and meditation of Other Emptiness for scholars and practitioners alike. Practitioners who are scared off by books on philosophy should not be put off by talk of the view—this is a book for every practitioner because it shows how to use the ultimate view and meditation taught by the Buddha a path to enlightenment.

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